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RELIGIONS OF THE FAR EAST

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RELIGIONS OF THE FAR EAST

Their History to the Present Day

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Foreword by the General Editor

AS PROFESSOR of the History of Religion in the School of Divinity of St. Louis University, Father Ring has here prepared for the information of the general reader a work of exceptional value and timeliness.

Deserving of the attention of student and scholar, his book nonetheless is directly addressed to the wide reading public. And wisely so, in a day when, more closely than ever, we are drawn into contact with what once was for us the remote Far East.

Compared with earlier periods, the distance between East and West has all but been annihilated by the invention of the airplane, with its possibilities for speed surpassing even that of sound itself. East is East and West is West, as the proverb has it, and yet it remains to be seen what approach they can make toward each other upon common ground. Bolshevism is hard at work in certain sections, while the Church has sought to do her saving work without trespass upon licit race characteristics. But first we must truly understand the people and their past. It is here that this book can be of unusual service, in its reliable outline of the Far Eastern religions through three millenniums. And no less vividly have we pictured for us the cultural and political history of those many peoples through the long changing years — their character, their discipline, their virtues and weaknesses, their savage wars and years of prosperous peace.

Aside from all other considerations, the present book is interestingly written, with a strain of gentle humor running through it like a silver thread, all of which greatly helps toward the production of a graphic picture. It is a book, therefore, not designed for the few alone who are absorbed in special studies of Far Eastern lands, but a work for everyone who would avail himself of its minute scholarly research and conscientious thoroughness. It cannot help but bring us to a better understanding of the peoples who are fast becoming of such growing interest and consequence to us.

What strikes us is the vast contrast between the teachings and perfectly attested miracles of Christ, together with the character of the Church founded by Him, on the one hand, and, on the other, the straws which men cling to when sunk in error.

Joseph Husslein, S.J., Ph.D.
General Editor, Science and Culture Series

St. Louis University

Contents

Foreword by the General Editor vii

CHINA

1. Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Republic . . 1
2. Old Dynasties 5
3. Jinghis and Kubilai in China 12
4. Mings, Manchus, and European Influence . . 17
5. Imperial Heaven the Supreme Ruler . . . 27
6. Gods, Heroes, and Spirits 33
7. The Cult of Ancestors 37
8. Confucius and Confucianism 44
9. Lao-tze and the Religion of Tao 60
10. The Light of Asia Shines in China . . . 68

JAPAN

11. Early Japan and the Japanese People . . . 74
12. The Way of the Gods 81
13. Buddhism's Challenge and Shinto's Reply . . 86
14. Buddhism Absorbs Shinto 93
15. Shogun and Emperor 99
16. Jodo, Nichiren, and Zen 109
17. Merchant and Missionary 117
18. The Tokugawa Regime 125

19. The Opened Door 132
20. Conquest and Aftermath 137

INDIA

21. The Hindu's Heritage 144
22. Periods of History and Periods of Thought . . 150
23. Vedic Seer and Brahmin Priest 158
24. Karma and Atman 167
25. Jainism and Buddhism 175
26. Emergence of Hinduism 180
27. Bonds of Caste and Superstition 190

BUDDHISM

28. Sakyamuni the Buddha 196
29. Sources of Buddha's Thought 203
30. The Path to Nirvana 208
31. Golden Age of Indian Buddhism 225
32. Indian Buddhism Absorbed by Hinduism . . 237
33. The Yellow Robe in Ceylon, Burma, and Thailand 246

ISLAM

34. Islam Appraised by Its Own and by Western Minds 260
35. Early Arabia 266
36. The Confidant of Allah 275
37. A Prophet's Progress 282
38. Shadow of the Crescent 297
39. Mohammed's Own Creed 310
40. Schools of Thought and Sects 327
Bibliography 337
Index 343

RELIGIONS OF THE FAR EAST

CHINA

1. Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Republic

FOR nearly four decades China has been rent by civil war and harried by invasion. In 1912 the Manchu Dynasty collapsed under the stress of popular discontent with its futility. Sun Yat Sen, who organized the popular discontent and was the moving spirit of the revolution, was a dreamer of millennial dreams, rosiest of which was the Chinese Republic which he proclaimed as the new order and government to supersede the Manchus. Governments, however, can but rarely be made to spring up suddenly from the earth by the magic words of a manifesto; they must rather mature gradually with the people so as to be an expression of their better aspirations and their practical experience. Sun indeed erected a framework of democracy copied on Western models, but within a year he was on the run again, an exile in the French Concession at Shanghai, whence he watched the President (Yuan Shih Kai) whom he had inaugurated quickly scrap the Constitution and evolve from president into dictator, from dictator into founder of a new imperial dynasty. With the passing of Yuan the republican name was restored, claimed now by two parties entrenched respectively at Peking and at Canton. With the latter Sun identified himself until his death in 1925, negotiating vainly to effect a union, circularizing the great powers with his hopeful but chimerical plan for a China modernized through huge foreign loans, turning an increasingly attentive ear to the voice of the Soviet siren.

The personality of "the father of the Chinese Republic" together with the sanguine visions which he could so skillfully evoke held suspended for a time the tremendous forces of dissolution. With his death came chaos. "The good earth," whose intensive cultivation had maintained the teeming millions on a subsistence level, had been neglected since the withdrawal of imperial tax officials, so that poverty and famine were widespread. Internal commerce had bogged down during the fifteen years of political upheaval, while external trade had shrunk to a rivulet because of foreign merchants' unwillingness to risk their capital in a country without stable government. Chinese eyes turned expectantly toward Versailles for some recognition of China's help to the Allies, but the power politicians, instead of extending a helping hand, reached out to grab precious Chinese territory which they had promised to Japan by secret treaty. Moscow subsidized and equipped armies in Mongolia which campaigned for the establishment of a Chinese Soviet. Other war lords organized free companies of the unpaid soldiers of Peking and Canton, and looted the defenseless provinces.

The troubled waters were ideal for Nipponese fishing. Japan, after humiliating the Manchus in war and setting up "spheres of influence" in Korea and Manchuria, had contributed to the downfall of the empire by affording asylum to Sun Yat Sen and his revolutionaries. How altruistic were Japan's motives became evident in 1915 when the weak Peking Republic was forced to grant the outrageous Twenty-one Demands. With Sun Yat Sen it suited the game of the Tokyo politicians to pose as benevolent advisers, and to the end he clung to the belief that China's rehabilitation depended much on the counsel and co-operation of the progressive island empire. Japan was content thus to increase her influence in the south under Sun's blessing, reserving more brutal measures until she had consummated her territorial grabs in the north. Presently a polite formula was discovered and actuated for taking over effective sovereignty of Korea and Manchuria.

But now the imperial ancestors, who had prospered the expansionist program thus far, seemed to nod. The situation in South China was getting rapidly out of the control of the astute Japanese agents. A strong man, Chiang Kai-shek, had arisen who, with the aid of the extraordinary Sung family,[1] was suppressing the banditry of the war lords, forming the nucleus of a modern army, and, more importantly, making the republican program of Sun Yat Sen work. A strong and united China would be a sour note in the symphony of Greater Asia which Tokyo was composing, so it was necessary to undo Chiang Kai-shek's patriotic achievements.

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[1] The Sungs were Shanghai bankers and among the first to extend financial aid to Chiang. Three Sung sisters have married respectively Sun Yat Sen, Chiang, and Kung (the last-named being a high official in Chiang's National Government).

Trial was first made of the technique of demands which had succeeded with the weak Peking government, but Chiang refused compliance. Thus the control of the China Sea coast and the coveted Chinese resources were not to be had without a fight – a regrettable upsetting of the expansionist time table. Still, Japanese strategists estimated that the rape of China would prove a dress parade for the emperor's forces, comparable to the war of 1894–1895 and to the Boxer War. The capture of Hankow, Chiang's capital, was indeed celebrated within a few months as the virtual conclusion of "the Chinese incident." But Chiang Kai-shek held on grimly, loyally supported by his own people, tying down important Japanese armies, and furnishing invaluable air bases for American counterblows against the Japanese islands. After the withdrawal of the Japanese in 1945, he regrouped his weary armies for the struggle with the Moscow-backed Chinese Communist war lords. Though forced by the *fait accompli* to accept Moscow's grab of Outer Mongolia, he campaigned tirelessly to beat down the war lords and to keep the shadow of Communism off the "good earth" of China.

For the moment Chiang's star seemed to be in the ascendant, as he moved out from remote Chunking on the heels of the Japanese to reoccupy the central and coastal provinces. But the government which he re-established was in dire need of economic and military aid. Only on condition that he obtained such, and speedily, could he count on the loyalty of a people rendered desperate by protracted agony. America's good will toward his regime afforded Chiang hope for the needed support, while General Stillwell seemed an ideal agent to implement this good will. The general, however, experienced an ever widening gulf between his views and those of Chiang and his Kuomintang circle, with the result that American aid was held up and that Stillwell was transferred to another field. General Hurley's subsequent mission proved brief and tragic. He reported the situation quite out of hand, blaming the lack of rapprochment with Chiang on the pinkish policy of certain of our own career diplomats, who allegedly were working in the interest of Chinese Communism. On whatever shoulders history will lay the blame, American aid reached Chiang "too little and too late." Under Moscow directives Chinese Communist armies swept down upon the Chinese Republic, driving the Nationalist forces from one capital to another till at the end of 1949 Chiang removed his government to Formosa. Of this collapse, incredibly sudden and complete, our Secretary of State has wisely remarked: "The Chinese people did not bother to overthrow the Nationalist government. They just ignored it. They withdrew their support and the whole military establishment disintegrated."[2] Fatalistically the people let Chiang and Mao fight it out, quite as disillusioned of their hopes of economic betterment at the former's hands as they were skeptical of the latter's utopian promises.

The statement is frequently made that China has changed more in the past four decades than in the previous four millenniums of her history. But one really wonders whether the revolution be not merely a passing storm which is just ruffling the surface of the vast ocean that is Chinese civilization. So old was this civilization and so tenacious were the people of traditional ways that the very name of China suggested peaceful immobility. China's will to survive as China has ever proved indomitable. Conquerors of the past — Mongols, Manchus — and their civilizations have yielded to this will and suffered absorption. Neither talisman — Western Democracy, Communist Dictatorship of the Proletariat — can be expected to transform the ancient culture of the Yangtze and Hoang-ho valleys. Is it to be thought that when peace comes Chiang, Mao, and their successors will find their house swept clean of the accumulated past by the broom of revolution and war? Rather will traditional ways, bred into the bones and marrow of the people through many centuries, reassert themselves and demand to be kept inviolate in the evolving civil polity. Without attempting for the present a detailed analysis of Chinese civilization, it may be described briefly as rooted *economically* in agriculture and the guild system, *socially* in the guild system and the family, and *religiously* in the triple paganism of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. If one desires to don the prophet's mantle to conjure up a vision of the New China, his best qualification is acquaintance with the China of the pre-revolutionary ages, especially with Old China's complex religiosity.

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[2] Mr. Acheson in a press statement of Jan. 12, 1950.

2. Old Dynasties

CHINESE tradition states that the first prince to lay claim to imperial dignity was ruler of Shense in north-central China in the twenty-seventh century B.C. He is called Huang Ti or the Yellow Emperor.[3] Favored by Heaven with miracles throughout his life and learning wisdom from the spirits in dreams, he united the people and taught them the arts of civilized living. Possibly he was an historical person, but if so he was probably one of a number of rulers who successively promoted the work of unification and civilization. He was succeeded, says tradition, by his son who founded the science of astronomy, then by his still more famous great-grandson Yao. So high an esteem did the latter have of a sovereign's duty that he set aside his own son and left the imperial title to the able and experienced minister Chun — an example of disinterestedness which Chun followed by leaving the crown to his minister Yu. Yao, Chun, and Yu are the ideal Chinese emperors, wise, conscientious, and benevolent, on whose maxims and deeds Confucius and later political philosophers based their teaching on right government.

In the dim past, then, we seem to discern several princely figures who labored to establish unified rule over the comparatively unified geographical region which we know as China and to make a nation of the fairly homogeneous tribes which we call Chinese. Their empire building laid well the foundations for the dynasties which rose, pagodalike, one upon another through the four thousand years of imperial rule. Only Egypt with its long succession of dynasties affords an historical parallel of longevity in a governmental system. A parallel with Egypt, too, may be traced in the life cycle of each Chinese dynasty — establishment by the strong man, a long period of prosperous and undisputed domination, the reins of power slipping from the nerveless hands of later emperors, overthrow by a scion of some vigorous younger family. A change of dynasty did not mean a change in the system of government, but a reformation on the model of the good old days of Yao, Chun, and Yu. That was what the Chinese, most conservative and least revolutionary of peoples, expected.

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[3] The appellation "yellow" is taken from the *yellow* earth, for Huang Ti was born on a day sacred to Earth and was given by Heaven a tablet signifying that he had all power on earth. Tradition also tells of a Fu Hsi who held sway over the Chinese during their original nomadic days and of a Shen Nung who ruled them when they first settled down to agriculture. Fu, Shen, and Huang are sometimes called the Three Emperors and receive religious cult.

Emperor Yu, deliberating on the appointment of a successor, at last chose the ablest of his ministers, to the great chagrin of his own ambitious son Tiki. On his father's death the latter seized the government, proclaiming that the principle of heredity would henceforth determine the succession. The first of Chinese dynasties which Tiki thus founded is known as the Hia from the place where the ruling family originated. Though dating is still quite uncertain, the Hia Emperors held on from about the commencement of the twenty-second century until about the opening of the eighteenth. None of the seventeen emperors are particularly distinguished, but the four hundred years of their sway further unified China and cast it into the imperial mold. Chieh Kuei, seventeenth of the line, abused power so egregiously that one of his nobles rose against him and established a new dynasty known as Chang, which lasted until the end of the twelfth century. Nomads — Tatar and other tribes — from the north and west now began to covet the wealth accumulated during the centuries of peace and orderly government. They set the pattern, to be followed almost without variation down to the time of the Mongols, of cavalry raids sweeping across the border, slaying and looting as widely as they dared, retiring laden with booty and well ahead of the slow-moving imperial troops. The meager annals of the Chang Dynasty narrate, besides this external harassment from the nomads, how officialdom grew corrupt, how the people deteriorated in the practice of virtue, how the royal family itself at last sank into luxury and consequent incapacity for ruling.

Last of the Changs and an intolerable tyrant, Chou Hsin imprisoned Prince Wen Wang of Chow for protesting against misrule and cruelty. He was freed through the efforts of his son Wu Wang and returned to his western district where he had been valiantly holding off the nomads. His imprisonment, however, brought to a head the discontent of the nobles, who banded together under Wu's leadership and overthrew the tyrant. Wu then initiated the third and longest of the dynasties, which endured for nearly nine hundred years and goes by the name of Chow. Wu and his brother Chou Kung were strong rulers, instituting reforms and restoring the vigor of imperial government, but in general the subsequent history of the Chow Dynasty is one of progressive decentralization of power until the imperial name became little more than a symbol, the real power having passed into the hands of the princes, each virtually independent in his own territory. To the enterprise of these feudal barons, rather than to any impulse from their nominal suzerain, must be ascribed the expansion of China's borders during Chow times. The Yangtze River and the Yellow Sea became the southern and eastern boundaries, while on the west the ambitious Princes of Tsin annexed the land of the nomads up to the edge of Turkestan. Not until the seventh century of our era did the empire absorb the peoples dwelling south of the Yangtze and round out China's present boundaries.

Except for fragments whose age is doubtful, written literature commenced under the Chow Dynasty.[4] Poems and ballads appeared, the earliest to be sung as accompaniment to religious ritual, the later composed on amatory, martial, and didactic themes. The collection of poems of the Chow period goes under the name of *Shih Ching* or *Book of Odes* and is practically canonical scripture in the estimation of the Chinese. Historiography began in the equally revered *Book of History* (*Shuh Ching*) which comprised legendary accounts of the old times together with some authentic Chow annals. Add to these collections the *Chun Tsieu* (a history of Confucius' times), the *Ly King* (a book on etiquette), the *Ye King* (expounding a confused theory of creation), and you have the Five Canonical Books. Confucian tradition ascribes authorship or redaction of all of them to the venerable sage. To him, too, are assigned two collections of maxims on self-control, on authority and subjection in the family, on right government of a state. Later works of the Chow period are a treatise on government by the illustrious Mencius and the sayings of Confucius recorded by his disciples. While all the literature so far named centered about Confucius, still other classics had for their inspiration Lao Tzu, a contemporary of Confucius and of equal rank with him and with Buddha among China's teachers. Tzu's spirit, with its penchant for metaphysics and occultism, was the antithesis of the spirit of Confucius whose preoccupation was with decorous individual and social conduct and with the science of government. To Lao Tzu tradition attributes the classic *Tao Te Ching,* a treatise on world-origins teeming with metaphysical subtleties and obscurities. The doctrinal implications of the *Tao Te Ching* were developed (also during the Chow Dynasty) in the brilliant writings of Lieh Tzu and Chang Tzu.

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[4] Writing, of course, antedates the Chow period by centuries. To give a single instance, there were excavated in 1903 the celebrated bone fragments on which were inscribed the responses of ancient soothsayers. Of the 2500 characters represented scholars have identified about one fourth, and they agree in dating the inscriptions well back in the second millennium B.C.

After a protracted twilight the Chow Dynasty faded out. In 255 B.C. the imperial title was assumed by the youthful Ching Wang of the house of Tsin, a ruler of Napoleonic stature. Backed by a public opinion long sick of misrule and disunion, he recruited and trained the most efficient army China had yet known, with which he put an end to the civil wars of the territorial princes, forcing the latter to bow to his absolute sovereignty. Compelling them to disarm and disband their troops, he transferred the control of their provinces to officials appointed by and directly responsible to himself. Aware of the importance of communications to a centralized government, he built roads along the very routes which are still followed by China's main highways. The nomads were kept away from the frontiers by the campaigns of his able general, Moungtien, but much more by the immense fortification of the Great Wall which Ching Wang constructed along the whole northern border. The great mistake of his policy, and one which has made his name anathema in Chinese literature, was "the burning of the books." In a pique at the opposition of the literary caste to his governmental reforms, he made a huge bonfire of all the classics on which he could lay his hands, granting exemption only to such scientific works as existed at the time.

No vestige of Ching Wang's greatness appeared in his son Eulchi, who after three futile regnal years was poisoned by conspirators. Ing Wang, then succeeding but finding troubles multiplying, took the coward's way out of suicide after only six months of rule. One of Ching Wang's better generals Liu Pang decided that the time was ripe for a new dynasty and, fighting his way to the throne through rival claimants, founded the Han Dynasty. Restoring the efficient government of the great Ching Wang, carrying on his useful public works, patronizing the literary caste, the Hans made themselves the most genuinely beloved sovereigns of China's history. For the first time the capital was removed south of the central mountain chain and of the Yangtze River and established at Loyang. This move influenced most of the still independent kingdoms of the southern coast to acknowledge the emperor as their overlord. It also secured the capital and the person of the emperor against the danger of capture by the Huns who during the two centuries immediately preceding our era ceaselessly raided the northwest frontier.[5] Through alliances with central Asiatic tribes and through the ability of Chinese generals the Huns were finally forced to abandon eastern expansion and to trek gradually toward the west with results which in later centuries were to be portentous for Europe. The doughty Panchao (late first and early second centuries A.D.), after finishing with the Huns, advanced to the Oxus and the Caspian, annexed Chinese Turkestan, defeated and laid under tribute the Kushana king of northern India.

For a time, as a result of Panchao's achievements, China contacted India, Parthia, and the Roman orient. Buddhism thus first became known, though it did not grow powerful in China until a much later date. Over the trade routes silk and other far-eastern products reached the Mediterranean and in return came the products of western civilization. Paper was invented in China about A.D. 120, but the breakup of the Han Empire and the consequent closing of the trade routes prevented its introduction to the west. For the Hans, toward the end of the second century A.D., fell into the usual senility of Chinese dynasties. There were no generals of the stamp of Panchao to maintain intact the outer provinces against fresh "barbarian" onslaughts. The military caste contended with the palace eunuchs for controlling influence at the court. A few of the later emperors were dissolute, others were mere children for whom regents ruled amiss. At last in 220 the emperor Hienti chose the peace of a life of retirement and abdicated, leaving the Dragon Throne vacant.

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[5] At this time five Chinese vassal tribes on the western border, who were called collectively the Yuechi, found the Hun pressure so severe that they undertook a mass flight to the west. In the region of the Pamirs and the upper Indus they encountered Scythian tribes known as Sakas whom they drove before them. The Sakas settled first on the lower Indus, later founding a kingdom in India proper. One of their kings is the Gundavar of the St. Thomas legend. The Yuechi conquered North India, establishing there the powerful Kushana kingdom.

Two war lords seized the provinces to the north and to the south of the Yangtze Kiang respectively, which were thereupon named the principalities of Wei and Ou. A Han prince for a time maintained himself in the western district of Szechuen under the title of Prince of Chow, but was soon ousted by Wei's ruler. Wei and Ou then fought it out until in about 275 the former prevailed and again briefly reunited China. Widespread Tatar raids, however, shattered the new framework of empire into a number of petty principalities which for another three hundred years fought among themselves and against the invaders. Only at the start of the seventh century did a Chinese prince, Kaotsou of the Tang family, weld a partial union of states strong enough to drive back the Tatars. Other Chinese states, sick of disunion, accepted the sovereignty of Kaotsou, who accordingly founded an imperial dynasty. While he occupied himself with internal reorganization, his son Lichimin conducted brilliant campaigns against Chinese rebels and foreign invaders. Succeeding his father under the imperial title of Taitsong, he continued his military successes against the Tatars and against the newly powerful king of Tibet who ambitioned control of western China. The next emperor, Kaotsong, thoroughly beat the Koreans and Japanese who had formed a hostile coalition on the eastern seaboard. His empress, the capable Lady Wou, succeeded as regent and, whatever may be thought of her banishing the heir to the throne when he came of age, her long rule was wise and vigorous. When her strong hand was removed, the country began to gravitate toward the disunion from which the Tangs had rescued it, as the imperial armies failed to hold off Tibetans and Tatars on the western border and Khitan hordes on the northern, and as provincial governors proclaimed their independence of a futile central authority. In the ninth century the last of the Tangs renounced an imperial title which had long been merely nominal. Tang memorials enduring to our own times are the Peking Gazette and the Hanlin College, both founded by Emperor Mingti in the eighth century.

Through Tatars, Tibetans, Turks, Persians, and finally Arabs, China was contacting a variety of foreign cultures. Buddhism began to move in, transforming and being in turn transformed by immemorial Chinese philosophy and religion. Christianity in its Nestorian form enjoyed the patronage of several ephemeral princes and raised its churches beside pagodas and temples. Persia appealed to the emperor Kaotsong for help against the hard-riding Arabs who had burst into the Iranian plateau and, though Kaotsong refused military aid, China did afford sanctuary to the last of the Great Kings and tolerance to the Mazdean religion of his exiled followers. Islam's conquests stopped at the Chinese border, but Mohammedan missionaries won many converts among the Chinese and, more significantly for future history, among the Mongols. The impact of all these cultural contacts will be more conveniently noticed in a fresh chapter.

3. Jinghis and Kubilai in China

ACROSS central China, at about the thirty-third parallel of north latitude, mountains thrust their way from Tibet to the eastern sea. This geographical barrier between north and south often played an important role in history, but never more important than during the troubled centuries which followed the collapse of the Tangs. Chinese culture as well as centralized imperial rule had developed and flourished north of the mountain range; then by a process of infiltration through the defiles and along the seacoast it absorbed the disunited peoples of the south. The later transfer of the emperor's residence to these newer provinces symbolized both their growth in prosperity and imperial anxiety about the northern frontier. For the nomads, having discovered a technique for breaching the Great Wall, raided the northern provinces almost at will and twice barely missed carrying off the emperor's own august person as a prize.

During the senescence of the Tang Dynasty a branch of the Manchus, known as the Kitans, practically dominated northern China and only waited for the definite passing of the Tangs to formalize their control by the establishment of a Kitan Dynasty. Contemporaneous with the rise of this northern dynasty was the setting up of an able soldier Chow Kwang Yn as emperor of the south. He and his successors (the Sung Emperors) were successful in liquidating the war lords who roamed the south, but had to buy off the Tatars on the western frontier. During two centuries Kitans and Sungs fairly followed a mutual good neighbor policy founded on common culture and on the interest which both kingdoms had in checking nomad aggression. The twelfth century saw the nomad Jutchis from the west take over all but a small fraction of the northern kingdom and lay the southern Sungs under tribute. Falling under the spell of Chinese ways, the Jutchi chiefs claimed the imperial title and for a brief period flourished as Kin Emperors.

But both their dynasty and that of the Sungs were living on borrowed time, for in 1161 the Mongol prince Temudjin had been born. Through conquest and alliance Temudjin united the nomad hordes north of China's Great Wall and in token of his sovereignty over them took in 1206 the title of Jinghis (Great) Khan. When a newly elevated Kin emperor sent him word of his succession together with a demand that he acknowledge himself a Kin vassal, Jinghis replied with counterdemands that the Kin emperor acknowledge his own vassalage to the Mongol state. An injurious reply started Jinghis and his Mongols on a trek of a thousand miles southward from the banks of the Kerulon across the Gobi Desert to the Great Wall. We may quote Jeremiah Curtin's description of "this army of invasion, held together by the sternest discipline and made up of mounted men only. The units of this force were ten, one hundred, one thousand, and ten thousand warriors. The orders of the sovereign were given to the chiefs of ten thousand and by them to subordinates. Each man had a strong rawhide armor and helmet; he carried a lance and a saber with an ax, a bow, and a quiver; he was followed by a number of horses, which had no food save that which they found as they traveled. Immense herds of cattle were driven in the rear of the army. In time of forced marches each man carried with him some milk and a small portion of flesh food."[6] The genius of Jinghis had transformed the raiding technique of his people. Under him and his successors in the Grand Khanate the irresistible surge of the Mongol cavalry was directed not toward looting the invaded countries, but toward destroying their existence as independent states. Rarely did the Grand Khans accept conquered sovereigns even as vassals, but rather slew or drove them out and apportioned their lands to successful Mongol generals.

When Jinghis burst through the Great Wall in 1211, the terror of his name produced wide defection among Kin generals and Kin allies. These he incorporated into his army and, overwhelming all opposition, drove the Kin emperor south of the Yellow River. Leaving the best of his commanders, Mukuli, to finish the Chinese business, he returned to the north, subjected Korea, and then led his hosts in the conquest of the west that has made his name incomparable in history. Plundering, destroying, slaughtering literally millions of its inhabitants, he careered through the vast empire that Islam had built, until in 1222 he camped on the middle Indus. His sudden decision to return thence to the east has not been satisfactorily explained, for his thirst for conquest must have urged him powerfully on toward Bagdad, the seat of the Moslem Caliphate. But return to the east he did in 1223, where while ruthlessly suppressing rebellion in a vassal state he died on August 18, 1227.

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[6] *The Mongols, A History*, by Jeremiah Curtin (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1908), p. 83.

Mukuli had forced the Kin emperor into dire straits, but had himself died in 1223, affording the latter an opportunity to win back part of his territory. Jinghis was planning, as soon as his hands were free, to attend personally to the troublesome Chinese and on his deathbed left to his sons Ogotai and Tului a master plan of conquest. The plan consisted of a vast flanking movement, which Tului executed by sweeping far to the south and appearing on the southern border of Honan province, while Ogotai, now Grand Khan, continued to exert pressure from the north. The two armies rolled up the Kin armies between them, effected a junction, and by 1234 had extinguished the Kin Dynasty.

Conquest of the Sung dominions, next item on the agenda, was delayed by the disastrous and prolonged struggle over the succession to the Grand Khanate. After the death of Ogotai's son and successor, a majority of the princes of Jinghis' family met and set aside Ogotai's line in favor of the capable Mangu, son of Tului. Civil war resulted when others of the princes refused to recognize the election, with the result that troops destined for Chinese operations were diverted elsewhere. Kubilai succeeded his brother Mangu, but the contest was only intensified between the new Grand Khan and the heroic Kaidu, grandson of Ogotai. As Kubilai gradually realized the hopelessness of getting his claim recognized throughout the vast Mongol dominions (which stretched from Korea to the borders of Arabia, Asia Minor, and Russia), he decided to safeguard at least his control of the east. Maintaining strong forces in the original Mongol homeland to hold Kaidu in check, he directed and in part personally conducted a relentless battering of the Sung dominions. After a protracted war marked by antlike perseverance of the Mongols and alternate heroic loyalty and execrable treason of the Chinese, the Sung emperor was literally driven into the southern sea. The final battles were fought between the two navies off the coast of Canton, where the prime minister took the new boy-emperor into his arms and leaped into the sea, dramatically closing the more than three hundred years of Sung rule.

Kubilai at once set about organizing his empire. His transfer of his capital from Karakorum, where the Grand Khans had hitherto resided, to Tatu near modern Peking attested his final resolution to be content as lord of China and to let Kaidu and other descendants of Jinghis exhaust themselves in strife for the vast western lands. At Tatu he built a palace whose magnificence Marco Polo has described. The Venetian traveler also narrates how Kubilai established an efficient postal system, had canals dug, and furthered other public works. Through sincere admiration of Chinese culture, he encouraged native scholars toward a renaissance of the classics which had suffered greatly during the long wars and had Chingkin, his favorite son and destined successor, trained in Chinese ways and learning. Many of his ministers, too, were Chinese wise men. In brief, Kubilai's policy tended to make the Chinese forget the Sungs and reconcile themselves to a Mongol dynasty. Less happy features of his reign, however, were oppressive taxation due to the dishonesty of the tax farmers, and the disastrous failure of two huge armadas sent out to conquer the Japanese islands. He died in 1294 after designating as heir Timur, son of the recently deceased Chingkin.

Though Timur capably maintained his inheritance, the Mongol Emperors who succeeded him proved a pitiful set. Their private vices and general administrative incompetence speedily lit the torch of native Chinese patriotism. Throughout the first half of the fourteenth century war lords capitalized on the national feeling to lead insurrections in all the southern provinces, while the famous pirate Fangkwechin harried Mongol shipping in the southern sea. None of these more or less self-seeking adventurers were destined to cast out the Mongols and restore Chinese sovereignty. It was a deed to be accomplished by a Buddhist monk who in about 1350 left his monastery for the career of a soldier. This Chuyuanchang was soon leading his own army and winning numerous adherents.

He was a fine general, a patient politician, and humane beyond the manners of his times. Some of the war lords put their bands under his orders, others had to be soundly beaten, but Chuyuanchang consolidated control of southern China and crossed the Yangtze. In central China he overcame sporadic and at times strong opposition of Mongol generals. When at last he crossed the Hoangho, terror gripped the Mongol ruler and his court at Tatu. Treachery and intrigue among high-palace officials wrecked all hope of resistance, and so the unworthy descendant of the mighty Jinghis collected his household and what treasures he could salvage, and fled northward along the very route down which Jinghis a century and a half before had advanced irresistibly to the conquest of China. Chuyuanchang entered Tatu as lord of all China and founder of a new (the Ming) dynasty.

4. Mings, Manchus, and European Influence

MING rule rested upon popular foundations. It was now a matter of five hundred years since the country had been united under native dynasts. North and south were alike ready to make trial of the government of the patriot ex-monk who in his campaign to expel the Mongols had shown so much ability joined with unexampled humanity. Nor did Hongwou (for that was Chuyuanchang's regnal name) disappoint popular hope. To disassociate himself from memories of misrule at Tatu as well as to secure a more central seat of administration, he abandoned the magnificent palace of the Mongols and made Nanking his capital, where he organized his court along lines of economy and efficiency. At the earliest possible moment he took the administration of the provinces he had conquered out of military control, to restore it to the civilian officials and the corps of civil servants who had proved their merit by examinations. Though the Ming period was not destined to produce great original literature, Hongwou patronized literary men and took important steps for a revival of learning. In particular, he subsidized and urged on the colleges of scholars who were laboring at the history of China and at a codification of the country's laws. Inspired no doubt by recollections of the zeal of his former companions (the Buddhist monks) for popular education, he provided many free schools and himself appointed the masters. As far as his finances permitted, he established public libraries in every town.

Remnants of Mongol power on the fringes of his empire called forth the talents of Hongwou's two great generals, Suta and Fuyuta. For the rest, he was able to devote the thirty years of his reign (1368–1398) to the advancement of orderly government and prosperity. Anxiety about the succession troubled his last days, for his eldest son had died and, though the latter's son Wenti possessed the qualities of a sovereign, Hongwou mistrusted the ambitions of Wenti's numerous uncles. His suspicions proved well grounded, for no sooner was Wenti seated on the Dragon Throne than one of the uncles, known as the Prince of Yen, revolted and after four years of civil war was crowned emperor under the title of Yonglo. The policies of Hongwou suffered little harm from the commotion, since Yonglo conscientiously pushed forward administrative and educational reforms and besides extended the boundaries of the empire by conquests to the north and southwest. Under subsequent Ming rulers progress continued in strengthening the Great Wall, in extending the system of canals, in storing granaries against bad crop years, in putting officialdom on a merit basis through competitive civil service examinations.

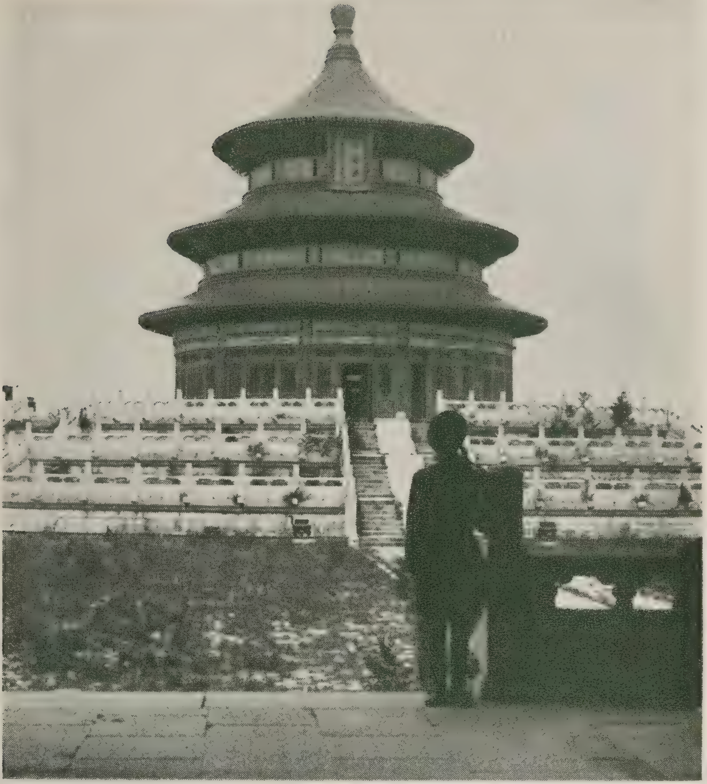
In 1517 a Portuguese squadron from Malacca cast anchor in the harbor of Canton. The admiral, Perez d'Andrade, a good diplomat, won the favor of the mandarins who recommended him to the imperial court. He repaired to Peking, which was once more the capital, and remained for several years as ambassador. But there soon occurred an incident prophetic of the future unhappy course of relations with Europe, when another Portuguese squadron arrived to commit piratical outrages along the Chinese coasts. Andrade was imprisoned and in 1523 executed by order of the Chinese emperor. In 1560, however, the government was so far mollified as to grant the Portuguese the use of land at Macao for the erection of docks and warehouses. Here the foreigners maintained themselves in favor, though not without systematic bribing of greedy mandarins, and enjoyed a practical monopoly of China's external trade. Through the gate of Macao entered Jesuit missionaries who ingratiated themselves with the imperial court by their scientific attainments and were permitted to preach Christianity. After the Portuguese came Spanish and Dutch merchants, but they were denied bases on the mainland, so established their warehouses respectively in the Philippines and on Formosa.

Unneighborly neighbors harassed the borders of the prosperous Ming Empire. Surly vassal states on the Burmese frontier required the discipline of punitive expeditions. On the north first the Tatar Yenta and then the Turk Popai breached the Great Wall, drawing Ming armies into long and costly campaigns. More serious was the threat from Japan. Relations between China and the island people had not been cordial since Kubilai Khan's attempt to invade Japan. Toward the beginning of the sixteenth century a trivial dispute between merchants was made the occasion for the Japanese to open an undeclared war on the eastern coast. Sea power was all in favor of the islanders, who for a half century preyed on Chinese shipping and raided Chinese ports. Meantime the tyrant Taiko Sama rose to power and toward the end of the century resolved to invade the mainland. Korea refusing to co-operate with his designs against China, he seized Fushan in Korea, through which port he poured troops and supplies. The Japanese pushed aside Korean resistance, forcing the king to take refuge in Peking and rapidly advancing toward the Chinese border. The Ming emperor Wanleh dispatched an army which, though losing the first campaign, succeeded in halting the invaders short of the Chinese border. Both sides then brought up reinforcements, Taiko Sama personally taking the field while the Chinese command was given to Lijutsong. The latter, prudently avoiding the chances of pitched battle, struck instead and destroyed the great supply depot which the Japanese had established at Seoul. Taiko Sama was forced to fall back on Fushan. His death shortly afterward caused the abandonment of the whole adventure, the Japanese sailing away from Fushan after an orgy of looting and murder at the expense of the Koreans.

During the reign of Wanleh events on the northeast border (roughly in the territory we now call Manchuria) were shaping toward a climax fatal to Ming sovereignty. In the growth of Manchu power we recognize several analogies to the upsurge of the Mongols four centuries earlier – the strong man of restless ambition, the fusion of clans into national unity, the organization of an army which in discipline and tactics surpassed contemporary forces. The Manchu prince Noorachu who effected all this did not cherish Jinghis Khan's dream of world conquest, but did ambition moving in on the rich Ming Empire. In 1618 then he crossed his southern border into the coastal province of Leaoutung. After important initial successes he was checked by the Chinese general Tingbi who confined him to northern Leaoutung. Court intrigue, however, led to the recall of Tingbi and his replacement by an incompetent imperial favorite. Noorachu struck at once, sweeping into Mukden and Leaouyang, the principal strong points of the province, and massacring their inhabitants. Cannons supplied by the Portuguese were employed by the Chinese, but too inexpertly to prevent the speedy conquest of the whole province. Interestingly, the fashion of the pigtail traces to this period, for the Manchus compelled conquered Chinese, in token of subjection, to shave their heads so as to leave only the single tuft which became the plaited queue of later days.

Noorachu's last project was a campaign against the Ming capital at Peking. His way was blocked only by the strong fortress of Ningyuen. Here he assembled his best troops and hurled repeated assaults, but all were beaten off by the Portuguese cannon and the more primitive armament of spears, bows, and boiling caldrons. Deeply chagrined, the Manchu leader fell back on Mukden, where in 1626 he died. The reign of his successor Taitsong was consumed in more fruitless efforts to break through to Peking, in raids on the provinces of Shansi and Pechili, in detaching Korea from the Ming allegiance, in enlisting the services of numerous battalions of the still formidable Mongol cavalry. Taitsong did proclaim himself Emperor of China, but that was just wishful thinking, for at his untimely death in 1643 he was in control of merely a fragment of Chinese soil. After his death, however, the collapse of Ming power was incredibly rapid. An arch rebel Li Tseching rose in central China, outmaneuvered imperial generals and swept on to capture Peking. In the panic the last Ming emperor strangled himself with his own girdle, while the triumphant rebel proclaimed himself founder of a new dynasty.

However, China's best army was intact on the northern frontier facing, as had been the custom for decades, the constant threat of the Manchus. Its commander Wou Sankwei made a momentous decision. Unwilling to march against the rebels and so leave the Manchus in his rear, he negotiated with the latter to join him in a campaign against Li Tseching. The thought of Wou Sankwei was that, after the joint action had crushed the rebel, the Manchus would be content to receive generous recompense for their services and to retire within their own borders. The outcome proved how naïve he was in his estimate of Manchu character. The combined operations of Wou's disciplined army and the no less disciplined Manchu forces shattered Li Tseching's bands in every engagement



UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD

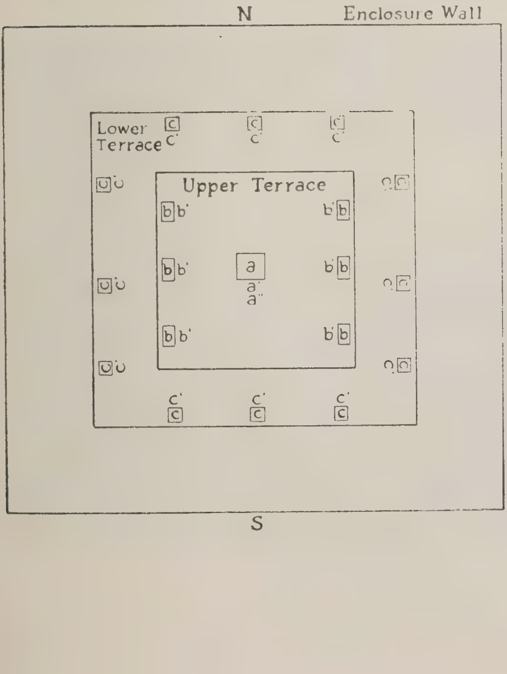

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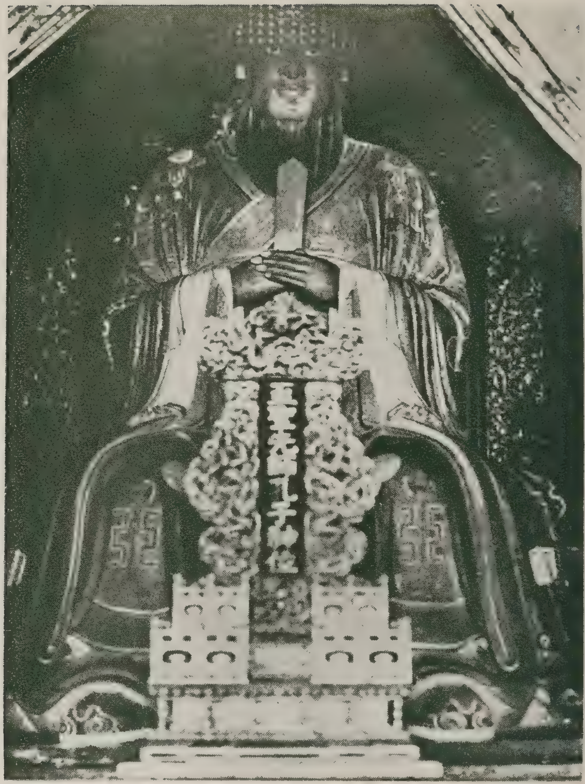
Fig. 1. TEMPLE OF HEAVEN AT PEKING. Here the holiest rite of the Chinese religious calendar was solemnized, when the emperor offered holocausts in acknowledgment of his own and his people's dependence on Shang Ti.

Fig. 2. PLAN OF TEMPLE OF HEAVEN. a, altar of Shang Ti: a′, tablet inscribed with his name: a″, holocaust of bullock. b, tablets inscribed with names of imperial ancestors: b′, offerings. c, tablets inscribed with names of astral and elemental gods: c′, offerings.



UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD

Fig. 3. CONFUCIUS. His influence on the ethics, social order, and government of China has been profound and enduring.

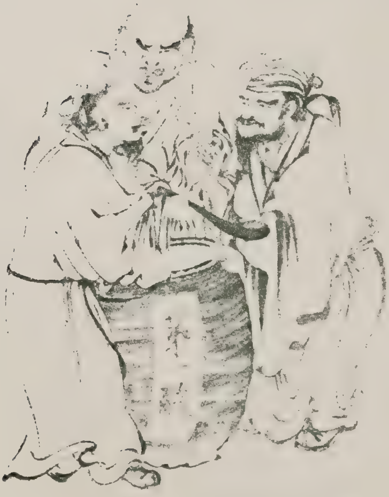


Fig. 4. THE THREE TASTERS. The drawing cartoons the blending of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in the popular religion of China.

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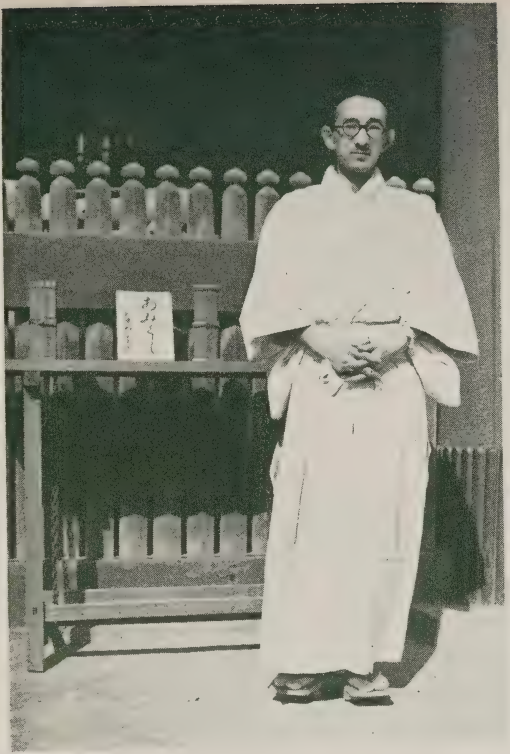

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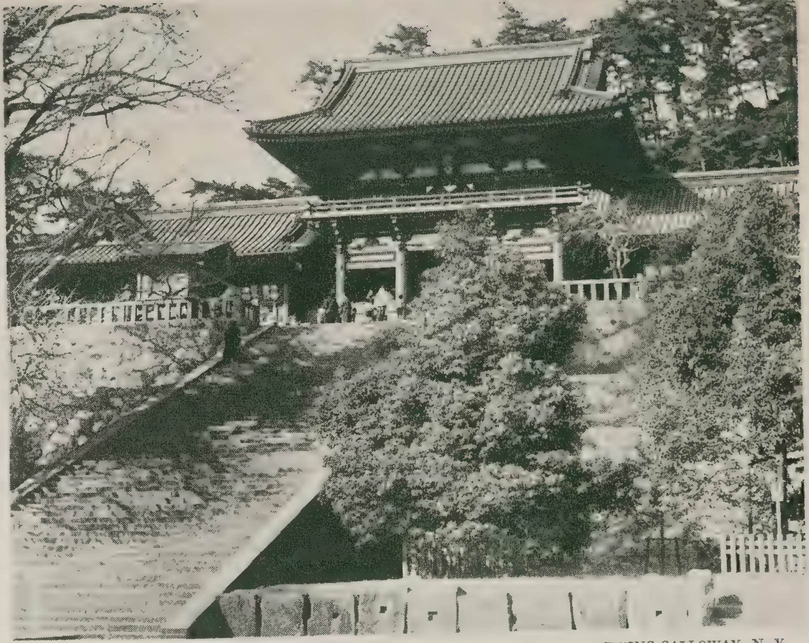
Fig. 6. A SHINTO PRIEST. Dressed in a blue ceremonial robe a Shinto priest stands before the statue of the war god Hachiman.



EWING GALLOWAY, N. Y.

Fig. 5. TEMPLE OF THE WAR GOD HACHIMAN. By a process of euhemerism the early Japanese Emperor Ojin-tenno was transformed into the war god Hachiman, whose artistic temple at Kamakura is here shown.

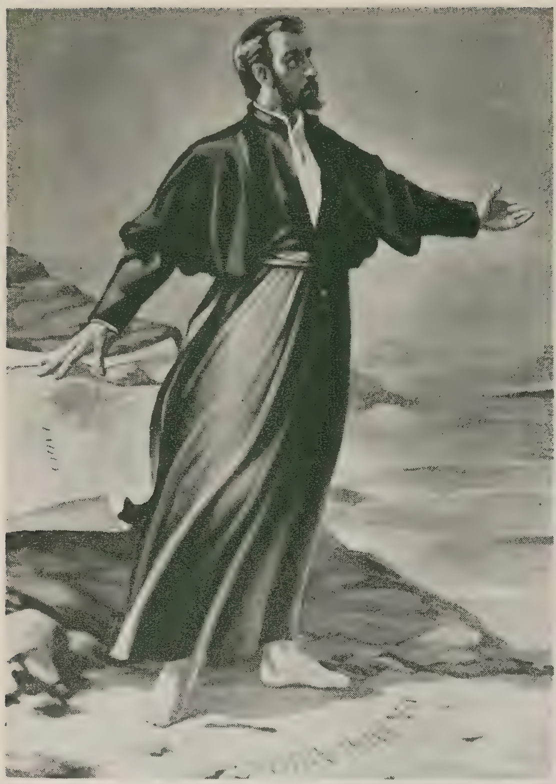
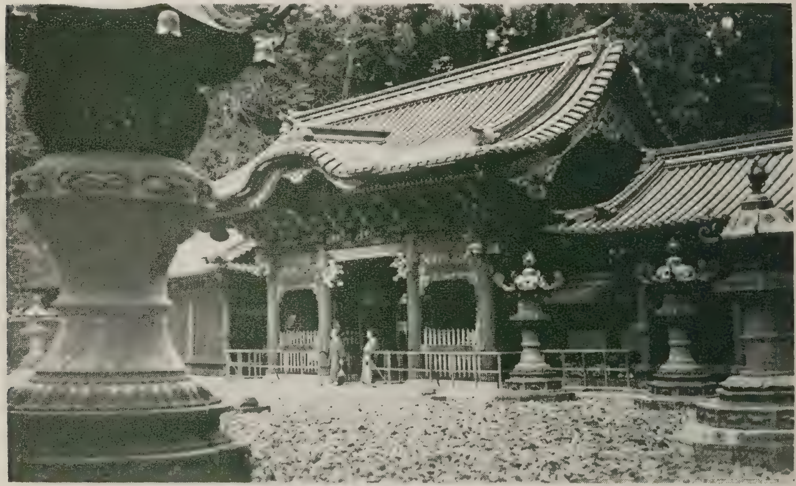


Fig. 7. SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER. Four centuries ago (August 15, 1549) he brought Europe's faith to the Japanese Islands. The churches which he and his fellow workers founded displayed a fortitude under persecution unsurpassed in the annals of Christian martyrdom.

NORBERT SCHRADER PINXIT



PHILIP D. GENDREAU, N. Y.

Fig. 8. MAUSOLEUM OF IEYASU. At Nikko are venerated the ashes of the most forceful of Japanese shoguns. He was suspicious of foreign power, and systematically severed all ties with Europe. Part of his isolationist policy was an atrocious persecution which destroyed or drove underground the flourishing Christian communities.

and the rebel was soon a fugitive in the western mountains. But the Manchus did not retire. By a happy turn of luck they had achieved in a few months what Noorachu and Taitsong had striven for during forty years; they had passed the barrier of the Great Wall, held Peking, and were quartered in force in central China.

Wou Sankwei was faced with the choice of co-operating toward the establishment of a capable foreign dynasty or of patching up a government from the shattered fragments of Ming power and prestige. In view of the chaos into which the southern provinces had fallen, of the general corruption of the remaining Ming courtiers and officials, he saw no prospect of a united front against the Manchus. He at last chose to aid the invaders, who at least gave promise of a vigorous government capable of saving China from utter disunion. They were not ungrateful, conferring high honors on Wou, nor did they disappoint his expectations, founding a dynasty which restored order and which before long won the loyalty of the people. In Wou's old age, when he was still loyally serving on the western frontier, jealous courtiers contrived to alienate from him the mind of his Manchu sovereign and he was ordered to Peking to clear his name. Too well acquainted with the power of court intrigue to take the risk, he tried to placate the emperor through messengers, but without success. Finally he raised the standard of revolt and maintained himself as virtual ruler of the west until his death.

The emperor against whom Wou Sankwei rebelled was Kanghi, to be reckoned among the most able of all China's sovereigns. During his long reign (1661–1720) he set working again the excellent governmental machinery that had been evolved under older dynasts. Through alliance with the Mongols, who theoretically agreed to recognize him as Celestial Ruler, he safeguarded his frontier against the rising power of Russia. There was a minor war with the latter, but it was terminated through mutual concessions. Peter the Great, the founder of modern Russia, dreaming of close and extensive trade relations, dispatched a magnificent embassy to Kanghi's court. Material results were disappointing, but the embassy marked the beginning of two centuries of peace between Asia's two major powers. Another achievement of Kanghi was the consolidation of Chinese influence in Tibet. Because of the extraordinary sway exercised over the millions of Buddhists in Asia by the Grand Lama, it was important that he be restrained from working to the detriment of the Chinese Empire. In the early part of Kanghi's reign a revolution in Tibet had resulted in the severance of the spiritual from the politico-military power, the latter being entrusted to a Tipa Lama under the direction of the Great or Dalai Lama. The Tipa Lama resented the long-standing preponderance of Chinese councils in Tibetan affairs and entered into alliances with Kanghi's enemies, principally with the strong Eleuth tribes. Only after a protracted struggle, both military and diplomatic, were the Eleuths checked and the Tipa Lama forced to welcome to Tibet permanent Chinese resident officials to watch over Kanghi's interests.

The Church, which had weathered the storm of the Manchu conquest, found in Kanghi a sovereign wise enough to appreciate its contribution to science and education and tolerant enough to allow its missionaries a fair field for the preaching of the faith. By 1700 converts numbered close to 300,000, and missionary letters of that period express the highest optimism. Their hopes for a speedy Christianization of the land were rudely frustrated by the policy of Yung Ching who succeeded Kanghi. Courtiers, jealous of the foreign religion and of the growing influence of Christians in state affairs, practiced upon the new emperor's strong nationalistic feelings. Unhappily, too, Rome's refusal to allow Chinese converts to perform the reverential ceremonies in honor of ancestors and Confucius (the Chinese Rites Decrees) had been interpreted by the Chinese in general as an indication that the Church was hostile to the ancient culture of the nation.[7] Yung Ching accordingly placed restrictions on convert making, closed a number of churches, completely separated his imperial person from the presence and councils of the learned Jesuits of Peking. Though the actual physical results of this imperial disfavor were not overgreat, to Yung Ching and his advisers is due the initiation of an official attitude hostile to the Church as a suspect foreign association and an invader of China's revered culture. Events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—the suppression of the Jesuits, the withdrawal of missionary support from ravaged Europe, the highhanded methods of commerce-greedy western nations—contributed toward deepening Chinese prejudice and toward the decline of the once promising Chinese Church.

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[7] Cf. Bishop Yu Pin's article in *America,* April 14, 1944.

Early acts of clemency toward Christians aroused hopes that Keen Lung (1735–1798) would revert to the policy of Kanghi, but as he fell under the influence of elder statesmen and as he himself acquired political experience he chose an attitude of reserve and suspicion toward the foreigner and his religion. Though, to please certain French artists and scholars whose talents he admired and employed, he occasionally granted concessions to the Christian missions, his whole policy was restrictive. Hence the Church barely held the little ground it had already won, while eighteenth-century China achieved great internal prosperity and reached out to control Asia up to the borders of India and Persia. Keen Lung's wars were uniformly successful — the reconquest of Formosa, punitive campaigns against the restless Burmese, the crushing of the powerful Eleuth confederacy, the defeat of the Nepalese invasion of Tibet. In countries which he conquered or which he had disciplined Keen Lung, instead of claiming sovereignty, was content to establish Chinese *ambans*, whose functions were analogous to those of British Residents in the principalities of India. With the exception of the French who rather improved their footing in the land, European nations came up against the proverbial Closed Door. Their trade was restricted to a few ports and suffered as much from the exactions of venal mandarins as it did from the pirates of the South China Sea. Diplomatic overtures, even the magnificent embassy of Lord Macartney in 1793, neither relieved the situation nor breached the wall of suspicion which Keen Lung's advisers had erected against all foreign influence.

Under emperors of lesser stature than Keen Lung China quickly declined. Corrupt officials were allowed to carry on their exactions unpunished. Repeated famines followed inundations of the great rivers, and government showed both indifference and inefficiency in remedying the widespread misery. Secret societies, some newly formed and some of long standing, organized popular discontent and expressed it in campaigns of terrorism. Even the emperor lived in fear of assassination, shut up in his palace under the protection of Manchu guards. The administration sowed more seeds of catastrophe by pursuing a high handed policy toward the European merchants, a policy which was shortly to wreck Chinese prestige when the country's medieval armament tried conclusions with small punitive expeditions of European warships and troops.

The East India Company, which held a monopoly of British China trade, carried on despite annoyance and obstruction until 1834, when Parliament abolished the monopoly and opened the trade to all ambitious merchants. Shortly afterward, Lord Palmerston, with his usual genius for bringing the diplomatic pot to a boil, sent the famed Napier to Canton as superintendent of trade with instructions to bring the Peking government to definite commitments in regard to merchants' rights. More of a soldier than a diplomat, Napier speedily lost patience with procrastination and evasion. Finding no Chinese official at Macao willing to transmit his credentials to the court, he moved his residence to Canton whither the Chinese had forbidden him to go. British trade was promptly boycotted and Napier, chagrined and worn down by age and illness, retired to Macao where he died. Matters thereafter went from bad to worse with frequent provocative incidents on both sides. Chinese officialdom made an issue of the opium traffic both on moral grounds and because through it vast sums of money were being drained from the empire. The British were ready enough to take steps for the suppression of the opium traffic, but regarded it as a minor issue, since what they wanted was an unequivocal recognition of their right to trade in Chinese ports. Minor hostilities opened at the end of 1839 and the following June saw a British fleet and troop transports at the mouth of the Canton River. In every engagement of the desultory war which ensued the superior tactics and discipline of the Europeans prevailed over Chinese bravery. In August of 1843, with Sir Hugh Gough's army before the walls of Nanking, the emperor Taoukwang capitulated. The final peace terms included the outright cession of Hong Kong to England, the right to trade in five principal ports, extraterritorial status for British subjects in China. Neither of the contracting powers would go beyond a declaration of censure on the opium traffic, since neither desired the trouble and expense of policing the coast against smugglers.

The peace treaty, though it opened the Closed Door a bit, failed to effect a real conciliation between Peking's antiforeign policy and London's policy of imperialistic expansion and free trade. Relations slightly improved when British naval power co-operated with the

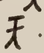
Chinese in clearing the coasts of pirates. But within a decade the British, now allied with the French, were sinking Taoukwang's brittle war junks and routing his levies of brave but futile warriors. This second foreign war — made long and desultory by the internal confusion of the Taeping Rebellion in China and by the Sepoy Mutiny which drew off British troops into India — ended with the capture of Peking and the flight of the emperor beyond the Great Wall. The peace treaty secured further concessions and the payment of a heavy indemnity to the allies.

The Taeping movement (the name probably derives from a town in Honan Province) originated in the mind of an obscure Buddhist monk. Claiming supernatural appointment to restore a native dynasty and adopting the title of Tien Wang (Heavenly Prince) he put himself at the head of a band of rebels against Manchu rule and by several initial successes stirred up patriotic enthusiasm in Southwest China. With an ever growing army of irregular troops he plundered and fought his way through the valley of the Yangtze Kiang, captured Nanking on the east-central coast and proclaimed a new dynasty. Here, under pretext of seeking divine illumination in prayer, he retired from public life to abandon himself to the grossest sensual excesses. Active command devolved on the thoroughly capable Chung Wang, who held all the Taeping conquests and even led a foray to the walls of Peking. With a foreign war on its hands, the Manchu government was utterly incapable of dealing strongly with the rebels, but when peace with the English and French was concluded the imperial armies began serious campaigning in the valley of the Yangtze Kiang. The issue remained doubtful until the Taepings made the mistake of attacking the European settlement in Shanghai; then it became merely a matter of how long the Taepings could hold out against the combined operations of the imperialists and the Europeans. The war was made glamorous by the exploits of the Ever Victorious Army, a force first organized and trained by the American soldier of fortune Ward and led, after Ward's death in battle, by the storied Chinese Gordon (Charles George Gordon, a British officer).

The Franco-British war, while it did finally convince Manchu officialdom of the futility of challenging European military power, rather worsened than improved international relations. A few additional ports were opened to commerce, limited diplomatic access to the court at Peking was allowed, foreigners and especially missionaries circulated more freely. All these contacts, however, served to deepen aversion to the foreigner as the invader of Chinese independence and culture, instead of opening the Chinese mind to appreciation of the important contribution which European and American ideas and methods could make toward China's betterment. During the fifty years between the Treaty of Tientsin and the upheaval of 1912 national sentiment expressed itself sporadically in outbursts such as the Tientsin Massacre of 1870 and the Boxer Uprising of 1900. The government — this half century was the period of the Empresses Regent — cannot be absolved of connivance at these outrages to foreigners, but uniformly chose to apologize and grant indemnities rather than plunge into another war with Europeans. Manchu prestige steadily declined, encouraging malcontents to rebellion and greedy neighbors to encroachment. The western frontier flamed with Mohammedan uprisings, and China had to abandon her protectorates and some provinces in that quarter. The new Japan, ambitious to replace China as the chief power of the Far East, after a series of minor provocations seized Formosa and Korea. Russia abandoned her traditional good neighbor policy in order to safeguard her own eastern seaboard and took control of the Manchu Dynasty's homeland, Manchuria.

5. Imperial Heaven the Supreme Ruler

THE Chinese emerge in history as a united people of tertiary (*weiterfortgeschrittene*) culture. Presumably they had long abandoned the unsettled nomadic life which their ancestors led before their occupation of the Yangtze Kiang and Yellow River valleys. They cultivated these rich valleys with ox and plow, with that love of the good earth which has been a potent force throughout Chinese history. Strong ties of affection and authority bound the members of the family and made it the sound foundation of society. Government was neither complex nor centralized, being carried on mostly by local officials. However, the belief that the emperor was the earthly image of Heaven, whose communication with him was direct, established him as national overseer and provider. His recommendations the people heard with reverence and were content to maintain him through taxation in all convenient splendor.

On sacrificial caldrons dating back to the twelfth century B.C. the ideogram for Tien (Heaven) is a rude picture of a man: thus . Later the uplifted arms were depressed and a cross line replaced the head: thus . Today the sign has been still further conventionalized: thus  . The meaning of Tien is either Heaven in the personalized sense of God the Lord of heaven or heaven in the sense of the material canopy overhanging the earth. In one instance in the *Canon of History* both senses occur in a single sentence: Emperor Yu is addressed by his minister: "O Emperor, Almighty God regarded you with favor, so that the Four Seas became yours and you yourself lord of all beneath the canopy of heaven."

In the *Confucian Canon* (ancient writings approved, written, or revised by the sage) Shang Ti is another term employed to signify deity. The translation is Sublime or Supreme Ruler. Used at times in combination with Tien (e.g., Shang Tien Shang Ti, Sublime Heaven Supreme Ruler), it is found also quite alone denoting a supreme personalized deity. The relation between Tien and Shang Ti is neatly expressed by H. A. Giles:

> A longer and closer acquaintance with the Confucian Canon has satisfied me that the proper equivalent for our word God is Tien; and that Shang Ti, Supreme Ruler, was originally a mere epithet of Tien, but gradually came to be employed almost in the sense of another Being, yet not another Being; thus forming, as I hope to show in my next Lecture, a Godhead of two Persons.[8]

And in his next Lecture:

> Tien may be regarded as God passive, Shang Ti as God active. . . . Tien is perhaps more an abstract, Shang Ti more a personal Deity. Reference to Tien is usually associated with fate or destiny, calamities, blessings, prayers for help and so forth. The commandments of Tien are hard to obey. He is compassionate, as well as to be feared, unjust and cruel. Shang Ti is more definitely associated with a heaven for departed spirits and He walks with men as God did in Eden, leaves tracks on the ground, enjoys the sweet savor of sacrifices, approves or disapproves of conduct, deals with rewards or punishments in a more intimate way, and comes more actually in touch with the human race.[9]

Throughout the oldest literature Tien (Shang Ti) clearly transcends all other gods.[10] While here one cannot expect theological precision of expression, there is abundant evidence that the Chinese were not obscurely aware of the nature of the Supreme Being. Of His inscrutable will a poet sings:

> The people now amid their perils
> Look up to Tien, Who is inscrutable;
> But if His determination has once been fixed,
> There is no one whom He will not overcome.
> This mighty Shang Ti,
> Does He hate anyone?[11]

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[8] Giles, H. A., *Confucianism and Its Rivals* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 12.

[9] Giles, H. A., *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 38.

[10] The evidence is chiefly from the *Book of History* (*Shuh King*) and the *Book of Odes* (*Shih King*).

[11] From the *Book of Odes*.

The complaint against Heaven's ways implied in the last line is sometimes more petulantly expressed, as in the cry: "Unpitying Heaven, Thou hast brought us all to ruin." Though vicissitudes of fortune thus result from an inscrutable Will, a connection between conduct and good or bad fortune is recognized in such old proverbs as: "The whispers of men sound like thunder to God"; "The eye of God sees clearly and rewards promptly"; "You may deceive man, but not God." The Will of Heaven lights the earthly path of the individual, who may indeed escape by flight the consequences of his offenses against family and country, "but if he offends against Heaven, there is no place where he may take refuge."[12]

Close moral ties bind the emperor to Tien. Appointed and enlightened by Heaven for his august office, he lies under grave obligation to rule according to Heaven's laws, and alone is empowered to offer annual sacrifice to Tien. If he prove recreant, he will be removed and the divine mandate will pass to another or even to a new dynasty. Prince Tang addressed the people: "I, a child, dare not start what is known as rebellion; but the Hsia (the dynasty of that name) are loaded with crime and Heaven has commissioned their destruction. As I fear the Supreme Being (Shang Ti), so I dare not but put this matter right. – Give your approval to aiding me your leader to administer the punishment of Heaven."[13] Professor Giles remarks that in these periodical overthrows of dynasties Chinese historians, unlike the flippant Voltaire, see God on the side of the just cause and not of the strongest battalions.

The idea of divine providence is rather confused. For on the one hand the *Odes* speak of God's inscrutability, of His being "arrayed in terrors, with many things irregular in His ordinations," of His being unpitying. On the other hand, He is "intelligent," "clear-seeing," "changing in moods" only as men change their conduct toward Him. "No double mind is found in Tien," and "duplicity is contrary to His ordinances." "O Thou far-off Almighty God," sings yet another poet, "Who art called our Father and Mother."

Tien's relations, then, to His world were not so clear in the early Chinese religious mind, but the same may be said of most ancient peoples, for natural religion in general does not attain to the concept of a Providence "reaching from end to end mightily disposing all things sweetly." When Chinese philosophers busied themselves with the nature of divinity, they interpreted divine inscrutability as a species of fatalism. In the practice of religion, superstition obscured the lofty thought that "there is no double mind in Tien" with fears that the divine counsels were capricious and that God must be cajoled like an earthly despot or rendered innocuous by magical compulsion.

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[12] From Chapter 28 of the *Book of Mo Ti* (a philosopher of the fourth century B.C.). A similar saying of Confucius is found in the *Analects,* III, 13.

[13] *The Book of History,* IV, 1.

In the *Shih King* and the *Shuh King*, earliest literary sources, Tien does not seem to be the only being to whom the term "god" is applicable; hence Fr. Wieger is perhaps too enthusiastic when he calls the religion of that era a monotheism.[14] Though Tien "gave birth to the multitudes of the people," though He possessed all the attributes already discussed, He was not the only one to whom altars were raised. In the provinces the governors, forbidden to offer the august sacrifice to Heaven, offered it to gods locally popular and thought of as much more easily approachable than remote Tien. Gods of this type, as will appear later, owed their origin both to the personification of natural forces and to the apotheosis of dead heroes. Some students of Chinese religion are of the opinion that ancestors were likewise worshiped as divine beings, but the merits of this view will be discussed later.

Various speculations are hazarded by authors to explain the belief in Tien. DeGroot holds that the ancestors were the original patron divinities of the Chinese people, "that they were no doubt in East Asia the first gods, before mental development and culture had caused that part of the world to invent other shen (gods)."[15] The implication is that Tien, a higher form of divinity, evolved as China's general culture advanced. The professor's premise is recognizable as a fitting to China of the (unproved) theory of nineteenth-century Rationalists that religion originates in men's dread of the spirits of the dead. As far as the data at hand serve, it appears that the worship of Tien and the cult of ancestors are of equal antiquity.

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[14] Wieger, L., S.J., in C.T.S., *The History of Religions* (Herder, 1910), Vol. I, p. 4.

[15] DeGroot, J. J. M., *The Religion of the Chinese* (Macmillan, 1910), p. 67.

A theory which would have the worship of Heaven a development from ancestor cult itself is outlined as follows:

> After a penetrating study of the character (sc. the ideogram for Tien) Professor Creel is convinced that it came to mean heaven only after a long development. Originally it was simply a pictograph of a "great man" and denoted a man of eminence and authority. It was specialized in meaning to refer to the "great ancestors" and especially the ancestral kings as a body. The separate individualities of these spirits faded out in time. As a unified power controlling human destiny they were treated as a single, rather vague, awe-inspiring, over-ruling intelligence acting from heaven. At last the character, Tien, moved in meaning from "the spirits who dwell in the sky" to "the place where the spirits dwell" – Heaven.[16]

One marvels at the professor's ingenuity without being tempted to take seriously his quite artificial construction.

Professor Haydon conjures up still another explanation.[17] He chooses to believe that "none of the literature in its present form can be dated earlier than the first millennium B.C. The scholars who wrote the *Odes* and *Annals* of that era were certainly far removed from the earliest Chinese ideas of deity and their highly sophisticated views of Shang Ti or Tien a far call from the time of origins." This late date for the literature (supposed, mark, not proved) hardly touches the evidence for Tien's transcendence in early days. The phrase "in its present form" is arresting, since it hints at a redacting or polishing of an older form of the *Odes* and *Annals*. It is scarcely probable that first millennium redactors (if such they were) would make so free with venerated documents as to interpolate their own "highly sophisticated views of Shang Ti or Tien" for "the earliest Chinese ideas of deity." Confucius and the whole tradition know nothing of such an impudent transformation. Unexplained, moreover, in Professor Haydon's theory are two important points: whence the redactors derived their "sophisticated" or higher concept of Tien; how they contrived to sell the concept to a people notoriously tenacious of old ideas. If the professor is to be believed, "in all the cultures of the early world the emotional attitude to beneficent phases of the sky gave to Heaven an exalted place, usually the supreme place among the helpful nature powers." So, following this penchant of all the cultures, the Shang people and the Chou people each revered a sky-god, Shang Ti and Tien respectively. The two nature-gods were enough alike to admit of a politic fusion into one when Chou conquered Shang. All this might have been, but the whole theory stands condemned as a card house built of fragile conjectures.

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[16] Creel, H. G., as cited by Haydon in *Biography of the Gods*, pp. 169, 170.

[17] Haydon, A. E., *Biography of the Gods* (Macmillan, 1940), pp. 166–170.

The truth of the matter seems to be that China affords in Tien data in support of the ethnological theory of primitive monotheism.[18] To state the argument briefly, a god who in a tertiary culture transcends other gods as Tien does was probably in earliest days the Only God. The gods men think up as they evolve from simpler to more complex culture are the forces of nature personalized through imagination and myth-making. Their origin is traced rather easily to the awe which the mysterious forces at work in the world inspire. The Tien of the Chinese seems not to belong to their company, for His power dominates all things, His wisdom guides the course of events, His justice is in general free of caprice, He is the fountain-head of morality through His ordinances and His sanctioning of right and wrong conduct. The Chinese themselves distinguish Him from the nature-gods, as three interesting facts show. They have sensed an impropriety in representing Him by any idol; they have regarded the sacrifice offered to Him by the emperor as the most august of sacrifices and the most necessary for national happiness; when Christians sought a proper translation for the word "God," Chinese scholarship suggested "Tien." In fine, it is very difficult to explain the position Tien holds in the earliest Chinese records except on the supposition that He is a survival of a transcendent Supreme Being who at the dawn of things was the sole object of worship.

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[18] The theory holds that the first religion was monotheistic. Its facts are gathered from studies of the religious and moral ideas of ethnological "primitives" such as African pygmies and Australian bushmen, whose material and social culture is of the uttermost simplicity. Their ideas of God and of morality, however, are purer and higher than those of peoples of more complex culture. A progressive deterioration in these ideas is attested for the more advanced cultures, sc. primary, secondary, and tertiary, which have an increasing number of gods together with steadily worsening standards of morals.

6. Gods, Heroes, and Spirits

THOUGH the figure of Tien has never been completely obscured, a teeming pantheon has more and more attracted the superstitious attention of the Chinese. The many gods that prescientific man invents to explain the natural forces which act upon his daily life have grown up with the people and have been dear or terrible to them. Some are propitiated throughout the whole country, others are thought potent only in particular localities. From the four points of the compass proceed good or evil influences from as many gods. Violent winds from the northwest are the breath of Feng Po, whose figure can be traced in the constellation Sagittarius. Rain comes from the southwest where Yu Shih reigns in the constellation Hyades. In imperial Peking, opposite the Temple of Heaven, stood the Temple of Agriculture in which each spring the emperor plowed three furrows to placate the spirit of the good earth. On five sacred mountains gods or goddesses are enthroned, most influential of these being the Jade Lady on Mt. Tai Shan in Shantung.

Mariners fear the caprice of Tien Hou, goddess of the sea. The mythical emperor Hwang Ti is said to have had a son Li who has been deified under the name Hsing Shen and who is the patron of travelers. City dwellers live under the protection of Cheng Huang, whose name means "city moat." In accordance with the superstition that local gods are practically omnipotent on their home grounds, nearly every district has its own Tuti-laoyeh, to whom the inhabitants have recourse in all needs. There is no rivalry between the place-gods of different districts, nor any thought of grouping them into a hierarchy of superiors and inferiors.

Among gods of home and family, religious devoir is especially paid to two guardians of the door, imagined as armed cap-a-pie; to the spirit of the hearth Tsao Shen; to Chung Liu whose name means "light shaft" (doubtless of the primitive house) and who watches over the whole interior; to the Buddhist goddess Kwanyin (substituted for an older indigenous divinity) who gives offspring; to Tsai Shen who on the New Year rides up to the door with a rich caravan and, if duly admitted and honored, will grant prosperity; to the venerable Shou Hsing astride his fawn and holding crook and ripe peach, ready to give long life to his devout suppliant.

Apotheosis of men whose public services were outstanding (euhemerism) has been frequent, as one would expect among a people who so deeply revere ancestors. In addition to the half-mythical early emperors (cf. preceding pages) who rank as culture-heroes, a few more apotheoses may be mentioned. Two able generals, Kwan Yu of the third century A.D. and Yo Fei of the twelfth century A.D., are so well established as gods of war that the 1914 Chinese Republic ordered sacrifices to them. Another warrior, Kuo Tzu of Tang days (*d.* A.D. 781), is also worshiped, but as a god of riches. A magician and politician, Chang Liang, so impressed his age (second century A.D.) that euhemeristic legend has raised him to divine rank. Literature makes much of nine other ancient worthies and apportions all divine functions among them, but they have never been universally accepted.

The Fairy King, Tung Wang Kung, and the Fairy Queen, Hsi Wang Mu, rule a race of Immortals who may be likened to the Dryads of old Greece and the "little people" of Irish folklore. Eight of them have been so strongly individualized by folk tales that they are very active demiurges in popular religion. When Taoism bade for popular favor as a religion, it supplied the Chinese with still other classes of supernatural beings, the Holy Ones and the Perfect Ones. To Taoism likewise is chiefly traced the phenomenon of triad worship on Chinese soil.[19]

The origin of this plethora of preternatural beings is diverse. Nature worship begot weather-gods and vegetation-gods, to whom anthropomorphism and mythology supplied human forms and passions. The superstitious sense of being acted upon for good or ill by unseen forces will doubtless account for place-gods and for the sprites who infest woodland and fell. Home and hearth divinities usually result from the feeling that there is something sacred about the family and its concerns, as well as from the desire for security and protection. Potent special influences on god-making in China have been the country's immemorial "ancestor worship" and a dualistic cosmogonic theory. Where belief is strong that the progenitors of the family extend protection from the beyond and where elaborate ceremonies honor and propitiate them, the borderline between filial piety and true religious worship may readily be crossed, especially when the ancestor in question was a man of note. A primitive cosmogony ascribed the origin of the world to a (material) principle called Tao-kieh which divided into two principles: Yang and Ying (male and female, good and evil). The two principles invisibly permeate all things in the forms of *shens* and *kweis* (benevolent and malicious spirits).

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[19] In a triad three gods, related through mythology or similarity of function, are joined in a common cult.

Competent observers of the Chinese scene remark how vital an influence polydemonism (for this seems a better name than polytheism) exerts on daily life. Charms potent in controlling the spirit world are written out and sold by the millions.[20] The Pandora's Box which confines the sprites may pop open at any minute in the belief of the superstitious multitude. So let a district but be visited or even threatened with flood, famine, pestilence: the Taoist priests, who are the experts in such matters, broadcast the intelligence that the kweis are on a rampage. Straightway psychopathic religiousness becomes epidemic, as kweis are imagined sniping from every house of the towns and lying in ambush in every ditch of the open country. While the market for charms soars, the Taoist priests mobilize the friendly shens for counterattack, leading them invisibly and the excited people visibly in great crowds through streets and lanes, hurling incantations and written charms into every cranny where a kwei may lurk. The more noise, the surer the effect; so there is a babel of voices, a beating of gongs, explosions of gunpowder, the rattle of strings of firecrackers. We may smile in a superior way at this popular hysteria, but after all unreasoning prejudice stirs human nature quite irrespective of clime or culture, and witch hunting is an international sport. It required only the lies of Titus Oates to stir seventeenth-century England to initiate an orgy of legal murders and to imagine sanguinary Jesuit agents in every hamlet, to report papal armies disembarking on the tight Protestant island. Sober Massachusetts burned scores of men and women as witches because three impish children imposed upon godly Cotton Mather and the other authorities of church and state their stories of being preternaturally molested. Stimulated by the absurd calumnies of Know-nothing agitators, A.P.A.'s, and the Klan, an incredibly large proportion of our American people believed that secret sinister agents were everywhere undermining our free institutions.

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[20] Doré, Henri, S.J., has gathered an ample collection of these (published in 13 volumes by Sikawei Mission Press).

The argument of St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* naturally comes to mind as the only satisfactory explanation of the perverted religiousness of pagan China.[21] The roseate estimates of this great population, which sympathy for their resistance to Japan has inspired, are an exaggeration. Yet the Chinese do possess certain national virtues and aspirations – they are noted for filial piety and close family ties in general, they are patient and laborious, they desire orderly government, they have in Tien a relatively high concept of divinity. That a people of such capabilities for good is in fact so scourged on in the path of base superstitions can scarcely be explained except on the supposition that it is demon-ridden. Human blindness and perversity are partial explanations, but it is "the rulers of the world of this darkness" who invisibly direct the tragedy of Chinese religious decadence. They turn attention from Tien to fantastic idols, garble the testimony of conscience to the soul's dignity and destiny, substitute for aspirations for light and grace a vain solicitude for material prosperity.

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[21] *De Civitate Dei,* especially Bk. II, Chaps. IV–XXII.

7. The Cult of Ancestors

REVERENCE for ancestors is a deeply rooted habit of the Chinese mind. As a social phenomenon, it attests a conviction of the importance and solidarity of the family group; as a religious phenomenon, it shows faith in an afterlife. Though often used, the term "worship of ancestors" is open to misunderstanding, for the Chinese rites in their honor are properly an extension beyond the grave of the offices of filial piety joined with a belief that parents and forebears in general cherish in the beyond the same solicitude for the family which they felt and exercised when on earth. Hard and fast distinctions are of course difficult to draw when one deals with the concepts of a complex paganism, but a brief study of Chinese ancestral rites will show that the ancestors are regarded as less than divine.

Funeral rites as elaborate as the family can afford are the first tribute to the deceased. After the washing and coffining it is often necessary to wait a considerable time while the experts in geomancy select a proper grave site by studying the configuration of near-by hills, the winding of rivers, the shape of houses, temples, and rocks. When these professors have given their decision and been paid off, the funeral cortege gets under way. Usual precautions are taken to exorcise kweis who may be lurking along the route, but the most curious feature is the scattering of (imitation) paper money with a view to buying the right of way from all persons known and unknown who may have a title to the land traversed. Provision for the departed in the beyond is made by burying with him various useful and valuable objects, or at least by burning on the grave paper imitations of these. Gravestones and tombs are the finest possible and are sedulously kept in good repair. Mourning, which lasts for twenty-seven months, consists of the wearing of mourning dress, abstention from luxurious food, and memorial rites at the ancestral shrine.

The wealthy have "soul-temples" whither they repair to honor and supplicate their ancestors; others set up shrines in the home for the purpose. In the principal room and facing the door are reserved two tables, one for the "soul-tablets," the other for offerings. The "soul-tablet" is two pieces of board on each of which is written the name and birthday of the departed. Joined face to back and set in a holder, the tablet seems to be regarded as inhabited by the spirit of the deceased who is solaced by the offerings set out on the second table. The whole service is directed, with a naïve filial piety, to the spirit as if able to hear and see. To make this pious fiction yet more realistic, one of the family, of the same sex and dressed in the garments of the deceased, acts out an impersonation by lying motionless on a couch throughout the proceedings.

The continuator (oldest male descendant) presides and is responsible for the proper observance of the ritual. Offerings vary in munificence according to the family budget, the emperor and the great of this earth setting forth whole oxen and sheep for the refreshment of their illustrious forebears, common folk with no less devotion presenting bowls of rice, sweetmeats, and flowers. Music is played while a loving cup is passed from lip to lip. In songs and speeches praise and gratitude to the deceased are expressed and the family's manifold needs are detailed. Finally all present pitch in and consume the food and drink of which the ancestral spirits are believed to have extracted the finer essences.

It is a crime against the ancestors not to continue the family stock by begetting sons who will keep up the sacrifices. Hence, adoption by childless parents is a widespread custom. Family property, furthermore, as belonging to the ancestors, is considered inalienable. Numerous exemplary tales illustrate Chinese filial piety: for instance, there is the son well on in middle age who plays with children's toys to persuade his parents that they themselves are not so advanced in age. The *Book of Odes* counsels:

> With your ancestors ever in mind
> Cultivate the virtue in you.

And

> Rising early and going to bed late,
> Do not disgrace those who gave you birth.

The Golden Age (Han times, third century B.C. to third century A.D.) translated the people's instinct into a philosophy in the *Classic of Filial Piety*. "Filial piety," says this work, "is the unchanging truth of Heaven, the unfailing equity of earth, the universal practice of man." "There can be nothing more in a sage's virtue than filial piety." In the ideal society fathers, governing their families well, "while alive are in a state of great comfort: after death, their ghosts enjoy the offerings." The sages, "following along the line of family affection, gave dogmas on being loving, on bringing order without the exercise of severity or the repression of awe."[22] The emperor by the benefits he confers on the Great State (united China of Han times) and by his condescension only imitates an ideal father, and by so doing secures good government and loyalty.

What the Chinese think of the soul and its state after death are of course questions suggested by the cult of ancestors. The popular mind on these matters seems to have been formed by a superstitious Manism, by Buddhistic eschatology, and by philosophic theory. Belief in survival beyond the tomb, desire of some means of communicating with those who were dear in life, perhaps vivid dreams which reproduced their forms and voices, readily lead untutored minds to the superstitious conviction that ghosts of the departed haunt the scenes of their earthly sojourn and demand the attentions of the living. About 535 B.C. the philosopher Izu-chan offered his soul-theory as a basis for this belief in the existence and activity of the "manes." According to him "the inferior soul 'pai,' which animates the body and directs the vegetative operations, issues from the first embryonic matter. After birth, the superior soul 'hun' is formed in man little by little by the condensation in him of the air he breathes. At death the lower soul follows the corpse to the tomb and, after a shorter or longer interval, becomes extinct. The higher soul is not extinguished, but after its separation from the body it is more or less transcendent, wise and powerful according to the degree in which it has been well educated and nourished during life. If its descendants make the ritual offerings liberally, it will keep quiet: if not, it will be troublesome. The lower soul also can do mischief until it is extinct."[23] This is the notion of the soul commonly held by the people since Izu-chan's day. Oldest Chinese documents clearly speak of an Elysium where disembodied souls enjoy every satisfaction, but are silent on a state of purgation and a state of enduring punishment. Buddhism's elaborate eschatology supplied the lack of definite detail in the Chinese Elysium with vivid teaching on Amithaba's Happy Land of the West. Likewise from Buddhism's doctrine of fantastic sufferings in endless reincarnations the Chinese borrowed a lurid purgatory and hell. Torments are of the material order – maiming, burning, and boiling, and the like – for the loss of God is scarcely considered, just as in the otherworld happiness of the ancestors the vision of Him is not an important element.

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[22] Quotations from *Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times*, Everyman's Library, p. 112 ff.

Scholars disagree on the interpretation of Chinese ancestor cult. Herbert Spencer considers it an evolution from the superstition (quite universal among all peoples) that the ghost of a dead man survives and demands propitiation. He further thinks that the evolution of all forms of religion is directly traceable to ancestor worship. "There is no exception then. Using the phrase ancestor-worship in its broadest sense as comprehending all worship of the dead, be they of the same blood or not, we reach the conclusion that ancestor-worship is the root of all religion."[24] Tylor's view is scarcely less extreme. "In China, as every one knows, ancestor-worship is the dominant religion of the land. . . . Nowhere is the connection between parental authority and conservatism more graphically shown. The worship of ancestors, begun during their life, is not interrupted but intensified when death makes them deities. The Chinese, prostrate bodily and mentally before the memorial tablets that contain the souls of his ancestors, little thinks that he is all the while proving to mankind how vast a power unlimited filial obedience, prohibiting change from ancestral institutions, may exert in stopping the progress of civilization. – Among the Chinese manes-worship is no rite of mere affection. The living want the help of the ancestral spirits, who reward virtue and punish vice."[25]

Spencer's Ghost-theory and Tylor's Animism naturally impel these two authors to exult over a land where the spirits of the dead absorb so much attention. Manism and Animism have long since been reduced to proper focus by more sober historians of religion,[26] yet many writers on Chinese religion have fallen under the spell of these theories. Professor DeGroot, for example, deems the ancestors the natural patron divinities of the Chinese people, for "they, no doubt, were in East Asia the first gods, before mental development and culture had caused that part of the world to invent new shen."[27] Special influences in the Chinese Empire, he thinks, were worship of living heroes and worship of the living emperor — cults which were continued after the death of these worthies and which served as models for Chinese families in the cult of father and mother. DeGroot holds unqualifiedly that ancestor cult is real religious worship, "the sole religious worship which the state sanctions for the people." The characterization of the phenomena as "reverence" and not strict "worship" is, in his judgment, a vain subterfuge. Finally, though the attitude toward ancestors has proved a strong force for social good, Christianity will find in it the chief obstacle to conversion.[28]

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[23] "The Religion of China" by L. Wieger, S.J., in C.T.S., *The History of Religions,* Vol. I, p. 8.

[24] *Principles of Sociology,* Vol. I, p. 440.

[25] *Primitive Culture,* Vol. II, p. 118.

Henri Doré, S.J., basing his conclusion on more than twenty years of close association with the people, holds that originally ancestral rites were merely expressions of reverence for progenitors together with a naïve desire to do for them after death what was done during life. To a considerable extent, however, Buddhist ideas on protecting spirits have introduced the superstition of asking the ancestors for help. The learned missionary is not prepared to call the observances religious worship.[29]

As was to be expected, the racial attachment to ancestral rites posed a problem for Catholic missioners as soon as they entered China. If the ancestors were in popular estimation divine, their cult would be a form of idolatry. Hence converts would be obliged to forego practices rooted in family and national life, would be rated as pariahs and invite persecution. Father Ricci and those who came after him conscientiously studied the problem as well as the allied ones of the Confucian observances and of the proper term for God. The Jesuit view, concurred in by the native bishop Gregory Lopez (A Lo), held that the ancestral and Confucian rites were merely civil ceremonies (and that Shang-ti was a proper divine name). Against this view were ranked the Dominican missioners in general, execrating the rites as idolatrous (and preferring Tien-chu to Shang-ti). The controversy waxed in fervor until in 1693 Bishop Maigrot, Vicar Apostolic of Fu-kien, condemned the rites and threatened interdict on all missioners who did not conform to his decision. A papal legate came in 1705 to restore peace, but Emperor Kanghi took such offense at his proceedings that he decreed death to all who preached against the Confucian and ancestral rites. A second papal legate arriving in 1721 was more circumspect, but the controversy continued until Benedict XIV applied closure to the debate by his decree of 1742. His Apostolic Constitution *Ex Quo Singulari* strictly forbade participation in the rites in question and required all missioners to abjure them by oath before entering the mission field.

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[26] Cf. W. Schmidt's *Origin and Growth of Religion,* Chaps. VI, VII, esp. pp. 71 f., 85 f.

[27] DeGroot, J. J. M., *The Religion of the Chinese,* p. 67.

[28] DeGroot, *op. cit.,* Chap. 2.

[29] Thirteen volumes on *Chinese Religion and Superstitions,* by H. Doré, S.J., transl. by Kenelly and McGrael, publ. by Sikawei Mission; Vol. V.

On December 8, 1939, the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide issued an Instruction regarding Certain Ceremonies and the Oath on the Chinese Rites. All priests are thereby dispensed from the obligation of taking the oath. It is permitted: (*a*) to be present at commemorative functions held before a likeness or tablet of Confucius; (*b*) to place his image in Catholic schools and to make the ceremonial bow to it; (*c*) to Catholic functionaries and students to assist, if ordered to do so, at public ceremonies which bear some semblance of superstition provided that, in accordance with Canon 1258, they remain passive and participate only in such outward marks of respect as may be regarded as purely civil in character; (*d*) to bow the head and give other signs of civil respect in presence of the dead or before their images.

These important concessions have been properly safeguarded against abuse. The Instruction itself points out that at the present day the cult of Confucius is to be regarded not as a religious ceremony, but rather as a mere civic manifestation of regard for Confucius and for cultural traditions. By way of an interpretative norm, a letter was sent by the Sacred Congregation to the Apostolic Delegate in China, which contains the following: "Compiling a list of those ceremonies which are permitted and those which are prohibited must be absolutely avoided. Otherwise the danger of falling back into casuistic discussions would arise, which in turn would resuscitate, under another form, the old disputes. When necessity demands, the Ordinaries can give rules and general norms. Since we are in the midst of a period of transition, they should not descend too much into details, but leave it in particular cases to the priests and even to the good Catholic laymen to direct themselves according to their consciences. It should not be forgotten that the confessional offers a splendid opportunity for solving doubts."[30]

A cross which has weighed heavily upon the shoulders of missionaries and converts has been wonderfully lightened by these wise pronouncements of authority. They may henceforth, according to the norms given above and under the prudence of their spiritual guides, join their countrymen in social and patriotic observances, abstention from which has hitherto done violence to their national sentiment and has offended kinfolk and compatriots. The reasons for the concessions, as stated in the Instruction and in related documents,[31] are information from those engaged in the missionary field and repeated declarations of the Chinese government. Such information and declarations satisfied Rome that the ceremonies in question are *at the present day* civico-cultural and not religious. The Church is not resuscitating Bishops Lopez and Maigrot and Father Ricci, to solve the case of conscience which vexed them in the seventeenth century. It is not even true that a *tolerari potest* has been spoken in regard to Confucian and ancestral rites in their totality. For, first, the Instruction notices that "some semblance of superstition" may still cling to certain ceremonies, holding up Canon 1258 as a norm for Catholics in such cases. Secondly, the letter to the Apostolic Delegate clearly indicates that some rites are permissible and others forbidden, admonishing bishops and priests of their duty to form Catholic consciences correctly in the matter.

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[30] The Instruction may be read in *AAS*, XXXII, pp. 24–26. The letter to the Apostolic Delegate is printed in *Coll. S. C.*, June, 1941. Fr. Gustav Voss, S.J., discusses the whole question admirably in *Theological Studies*, Vol. IV, No. 4, pp. 525–560.

[31] Cf. G. Voss, S.J., *op. cit.*, pp. 542–549. Decisions no less significant and on similar questions of civic and cultural observances were given between 1935 and 1940 for Manchukuo, Japan, and India.

8. Confucius and Confucianism

KUNG-FU-TZE (a name latinized by the early Jesuits as Confucius) was born about 550 B.C. in what is now Shangtung Province. His father's position as an official of the Duke of Lu probably determined the type of his education, for he prepared for and at seventeen entered government service. He married at nineteen but, earnest extoller of the domestic virtues as he was to be in his writings, does not appear to have been a very amiable husband nor a particularly affectionate father to his only son. Wife and son preceded the sage in death, but from a grandson descend the thousands of Chinese who enjoy a special title of nobility and special privileges on account of their Confucian blood. Confucius himself died in about 479.

The State of Lu was one of the virtually independent principalities which made up the Chow Empire.[32] To the emperor, at his capital Lo in Honan Province, were left the empty name and the trappings of supreme authority, while the princes, who nominally were his provincial governors, did as they liked in their own territory. Some of them doubtless were high-minded and able enough to keep their houses in order, but the over-all result proved to be corruption in governing circles and deterioration of civic virtues and morality among the people. The chaos irked Confucius' orderly soul; his apprenticeship in government service increased his zeal for good form and efficiency; but most importantly his studies (of old records, of books of ceremonies, of the *Odes*) evoked a vision of an Utopia where all would be "fitting"—relations of parent and child, master and servant, ruler and subject. China had been such a happy land, thought he, under Emperors Yao, Chun, and Yu and sorely needed to be reformed in heart and manners into that same ideal mold. The decencies—individual, domestic, social, and political—of external behavior were what he wanted to restore. Yet it goes without saying that his evangel penetrated beneath the surface of external decorum. No man who was a mere martinet for rubric and etiquette ever attained the historical stature of a Confucius. An ethical ideal animated his reforming zeal: the ethos in question was at least the spirit of China's great past. Religion and morals perhaps were not primary objects of his interest, but, as will appear, he was neither inimical to them nor unaware that they were indispensable parts of a well-ordered society.

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[32] Cf. pp. 6 ff. above.

After his mother's death and the three years of mourning and retirement which he meticulously observed, Confucius in 526 began to indoctrinate an ever widening circle of disciples with his ideas for China's betterment. He seems deliberately to have chosen the career of teaching not as the best but as the only practicable means of effecting reforms. Politics in Lu were not a game in which an honest man with ideals could hope to win, so there was no point in seeking public office. Duke Ting of Lu admired Confucius and the latter at one period had hopes of holding the place of confidential counselor to the chief of state, but he soon discovered that Ting was too weak and too enmeshed in the web of the politicians. The Duke's friendship, however, served as an aegis under whose shadow the sage taught unhindered for a quarter century, clarifying his own ideas, enhancing his prestige, acquiring unparalleled ascendancy over the minds of thoughtful contemporaries.

At long last Confucius was prevailed upon by friends to accept public office—the prefecture of the district of Chung Tu in about the year 500. His success was exceptional, so that his elevation to two higher offices came in quick succession. But after four years he saw his work so hindered by jealousies and his patron Duke Ting so indifferent to reform that he regretfully left the State of Lu to its chronic misrule, to spend thirteen years as a wandering teacher in other parts of China. He found the other states very much in the same condition as his native Lu, nor was he able to effect reforms. Despite a growing sense of frustration he continued preaching up his Utopia and, as the future was to show, built better than he knew. His ideas, handed down by disciples whom he powerfully influenced, worked up into a philosophy by the great Mencius, were gradually allied with popular religion and won through to canonization by the statecraft of later centuries. In old age he returned to Lu. Within three years of his return he lost by death his wife, his son and the two best-beloved of his disciples. Saddened besides by the utter lack of improvement in his native state's affairs he welcomed the coming of death. Legend says that the same wonderful unicorn which had appeared at his birth brought him warning of his death. (Here it may be remarked that apart from this unicorn story the marvelous plays practically no part in Confucian biography.)

In the *Analects* (a collection of the sayings of the sage as recalled by his disciples) Confucius' words of wisdom are received with such reverence that some sort of inspiration seems attributed to them. Beyond a few doubtful texts evidence is wanting that he thought himself divinely enlightened or commissioned. Emperors Yao, Chun, and Yu were accepted as being so, but as for himself he merely sought to learn from the ancient writings what they taught and so to teach others. Since he was so preoccupied with the books, a catalogue of them is in order. They are:

Shu King, annals ranging from 2357 to 627;
Shi King, a collection of poems, some perhaps dating back to 1500;
Ye King or "Book of Changes," treating of cosmogony and magic lore, attributed to Prince Wen (twelfth century);
I Li and *Chou Li,* two books of rites and etiquette;
Chun Chiu, a history from the year 724 to 484.

With the exception of the *Book of Changes,* these classics were revised by Confucius himself, but to what extent in each case it is not clear. For the *Odes* he seemed to have taken on himself to expurgate or wholly reject poems offensive to good morals, while for the *Chun Chiu* which is a history of his own state of Lu he probably made numerous corrections and additions from his own studies.

Confucius' high commendation and his redaction of the above classics have raised them in China to the rank of "canonical scripture." Four post-Confucian books have likewise been "canonized" because they are held to contain the sage's own teaching, though he is not their author. They are:

Lun Yu or the *Analects,* sayings of Confucius compiled by disciples;
Ta Heo or "Great Learning," written by a Confucianist in early fourth century B.C.;
Chung Yung or "The Mean in Action," partly by Tzu Ssu, grandson of Confucius, partly by a Confucianist of third century B.C.;
Mang Tzu or the "Book of Mencius," by this philosopher in middle fourth century B.C.

There are finally two apocryphal books which enjoy great repute in Confucian circles, though of uncertain provenance and of rather late date. The *Kia Yu* or "Family Traditions" professes to give much biographical material on the life of the sage. The *Hiao King* narrates twenty-four examples of the filial piety which was one of Confucius' cardinal teachings.

"I am a transmitter and not an originator, a believer in and lover of antiquity."[33] He was tireless in citing the old books and pointing out their sense, in urging their study as an all-sufficient way to wisdom. Apart from his own constant study of them, he had no special means of knowledge. Neither did he bumptiously claim to have all the answers, but persevered until old age in the attitude of a learner. "Given a few more years of life to finish my study of the *Ye King,* I may be freed from great errors." Nor was he fond of the lecture method, nor intrusive with his advice. Rather he waited until the sincere inquirer sought him out, then answered with simplicity or more often suggested premises from which the questioner could reach his own solution. "I expound nothing to him who is not in earnest, nor help out anyone not anxious to express himself. When I have demonstrated one angle and he cannot bring me back the others, then I do not repeat my lesson."[34] "Am I indeed a man with innate knowledge? I have no such knowledge, but when an uncultivated person in all simplicity comes to me with a question, I thresh out its pros and cons until I get to the bottom of it."[35]

The essential goodness of human nature is a first principle with him, as with the rest of China's wise men. The tree being good is not to be uprooted, but rather trained assiduously in order to reach full perfection. Hence parents and masters, but especially the father, must take the young in hand and form them in individual and social virtues, until they be mature enough to be captains of their own souls. The Confucian ideal of individual virtue finds analogy rather in the unruffled poise of Stoicism than in Buddhism's ataraxia or Christianity's self-denial. Poise might in fact be called the hallmark of "the superior man"—the phrase used in the *Analects* to characterize the virtuous Chinaman. "The superior man has neither fear nor anxiety. When internal examination discovers nothing wrong, what is there to be anxious about, what is there to fear?—He with whom neither slander that gradually soaks into the mind nor statements that startle like a wound in the flesh are successful may be called intelligent indeed."[36] Control of emotions must be cultivated until one is untroubled by bodily lusts, until the mind remains serene amid all changes of fortune and against all contradiction, until the judgment is no longer swayed by fear or anger or unreasoned affection. Ambition for public office, however, is a passion which the superior man ought to cherish, with a view to diffusing his influence. It is an interesting question whether to all the Confucian virtues implied in the above self-control should be added humility. Modesty about one's own accomplishments the sage does extol, as well as censure the arrogance of those who are forward and overconfident in their own wisdom. However, the superior man of the *Analects* seems a bit too conscious of his superiority, a bit too sure that *noblesse oblige* safeguards him against lapsing into the ignorance and wallowing of the inferior herd.

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[33] *Analects,* VII, 1.
[34] *Ibid.,* VII, 8.
[35] *Ibid.,* IX, 7.

Various formulae are given to characterize the superior man:

> The Master said: The superior man in everything considers righteousness to be essential. He performs it according to the rules of propriety. He brings it forth in humility. He completes it with sincerity. This is indeed a superior man.[37]
>
> The Master said: If one had the wisdom of Tsang Wu Chung, the freedom from private desires of Kung Cho, the courage of Chung Tzu, the skill of Jan Chiu in the arts, and refined these qualities by ritual and music, that is good enough to make a

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[36] *Ibid.*, XII, 3, 4.

[37] *Ibid.*, XV, 7.

> complete man. But how can we insist on this today? When a man sees the chance of profit to think of the right, when he sees danger ahead for his prince or parents to throw his life into the scale, in a long-drawn out emergency not to forget his life-long principles, that also is enough to make a complete man.[38]

"Rites," "ceremonies," "rules of propriety" are emphasized to a degree that rather startles our western mentality, but this is just one of the matters in which the Chinese (and Japanese) men of culture do not see eye to eye with us. It would be narrow-minded to set down this solicitude for etiquette as pharisaism. Book X of the *Analects* pictures Confucius' own meticulously correct deportment: how when called to audience with his prince "he ascended the reception hall holding up his robe with both hands and with his body bent"; how among his compeers "he bowed to them, keeping the skirts of his robe before and behind evenly adjusted"; how even meeting a blind man "he would salute him in a ceremonious manner"; how "by the side of a mourner he never ate to the full, nor sang on the same day in which he had been weeping." To be impolite, he says, is unworthy of men of honor, for "even in archery tournaments the competitors advance with a bow and a gesture of yielding precedence, and afterwards they retire and drink to one another."[39] Where etiquette is disprized, the very virtues of the heart degenerate, for "respectfulness without the rules of propriety becomes laborious bustle; carefulness without the rules of propriety becomes timidity; boldness without the rules of propriety becomes insubordination; straightforwardness without the rules of propriety becomes rudeness."[40] The sage tells one of his disciples that his conduct in public should be as circumspect as if he were always in the presence of an honored guest; that if his office calls on him to issue commands to others, he should do so as reverently as if he were conducting a great sacrifice.

Later on will be outlined the philosophy which underlies ceremonialism. For the present it is to be noted that rules of propriety are a master chord which runs through the whole gamut of human relations — the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and brother, friend and friend, ruler and subject. Besides such obvious social virtues as sincerity and justice, Confucius emphasizes the need for reciprocity and human-heartedness. Two texts show what he means by the former:

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[38] *Ibid.,* XIV, 13.
[39] *Ibid.,* III, 7.
[40] *Ibid.,* VIII, 1.

> Tsze Kung asked, saying: "It there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" The Master said: "Is it not reciprocity? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."[41]
>
> Someone said: "What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" The Master said: "With what then will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness."[42]

Confucius, then, subscribed to the Golden Rule, but was not prepared to practice the Christian folly of love of enemies. It would be interesting to know who of his contemporaries believed in meeting injuries with kindness, but as for himself he had no coals of fire to heap on the head of a man who affronted him.

Jen is a Confucian term which has exercised the ingenuity of translators. Some have rendered it "perfect virtue" (C. A. Wong), others "charity of heart" (H. A. Giles), others "human-heartedness" (E. R. Hughes). The last rendition seems preferable. In sense the term includes a feeling of solidarity with the members of the society in which you live, an altruistic desire to secure for others the goods you yourself esteem, an effort to extend your own influence for right conduct and the decencies to the utmost. "It is only the human-hearted man," said the Master, "who is capable of really liking men and really disliking them. If he be really bent on human-heartedness, then there is no wickedness in him."[43]

Interestingly the man whose theories of government virtually became law for future emperors has little to say of those who sat on the Dragon Throne during his own days. The imperial title was held by a succession of obscure individuals at Lo in Honan Province, and once Confucius went on pilgrimage to this nominal national capital. What he saw there as well as what he observed in his wanderings through various provinces convinced him that government in his time was a far cry from what the books told

[41] *Ibid.*, XV, 10.
[42] *Ibid.*, XIV, 1.
[43] *Ibid.*, IV, 3, 4.

of the rule of the Three Emperors. Though he clung to the ideal of a China united as it had been under Yao, Shun, and Yu, he was practical enough to adapt his evangel to actualities. Instead of urging that the Dukes of Lu, Chi, and the rest surrender themselves in vassalage to the futile Chow emperor, he drummed into his disciples and insinuated to the princes principles of good government as applicable to the microcosm of a feudal principality as to the macrocosm of the empire. He was pessimistic on the prospects for reform, growing more deeply so with widening experience of Chinese politics and with the coming on of old age. Yet he abhorred the spirit of revolution, preferring passive submission under misrule and counseling his followers: "Do not enter any area which is running dangerous risks, nor live in one where the people are in rebellion. If the Way prevails among the states, you can make yourselves prominent; but if it does not prevail, then keep in retirement. If it prevails in your area, it is a disgrace to be poor and humble. If it does not prevail, it is a disgrace to be rich and honored."[44] While personally ardently desirous of holding high public office, he practiced what he here preached by his own reverence for constituted authority even when weak and corrupt, and by steadfastly declining a public charge in which he would be obliged to "play ball" with unprincipled factions and "bosses."

In rare rhapsody Confucius exclaims:

> What sublime majesty was that of Shun and Yu! The Great Society (united China) was theirs, but they were not trammelled by it. How great was Yao as a sovereign! The sublime majesty of him! Only Heaven is great; only Yao copied it. This spiritual power going beyond all bounds, so that no man may give a name to it! Sublime majesty, with its sublime achievements of civilization, all glorious to view![45]

"Copying Heaven" is the talisman of good government, for Heaven has sown the seed of it in men's nature, and the ruler has but to recognize this seed and make it fructify. Here, as in the education of the individual (cf. p. 48 above), the essential goodness of nature is presupposed. The people's impulses want and tend toward right government. The ruler needs but to "know men's feelings, lay open to them what they consider right, show clearly to them what is advantageous, and comprehend what are their calamities."[46] Hence the warning to governors:

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[44] *Ibid.*, VIII, 13.

[45] *Ibid.*, VIII, 18, 19.

> If your words were harmonious,
> The people would become united.
> If your words were gentle and kind,
> The people would be settled.[47]

The Master rebuked an impatient official who suggested killing off the troublesome as a means to peaceful administration: "Let your own desires be good, and the people will be good." He told the same man that "to rule is to straighten things out." "Be a leader and work hard for them" is another of his aphorisms. Seeing that the needful military establishment is efficient, looking to the food supply and other means of prosperity, appointing competent teachers for the young, the sovereign will win popular confidence and docile submission. Beyond all else the ruler must have moral power, for: "If you try to lead the people by means of regulations and to order their life by means of punishments, they will try to avoid them without any conscience whatever. If, however, you try to lead them by your own moral power and to order their life by means of rituals, both their consciences will act and they will flock round you."[48] When a ruler is personally irreproachable in his reverence for traditions, just and benignant, "then the common people will flock to his country from all parts, carrying their babies on their backs."[49] So, in brief, the folk want to be well governed and *qualis rex, talis grex.* The Confucian theory reduces neither to democracy nor to the divine right of kings, but may perhaps be said to approximate benevolent monarchy.

Religious and philosophic teaching are found at a minimum in the practical and well-nigh pragmatic doctrine of China's wise man. He conceived that his purpose of reconstituting the Utopia of the Great Society had little to do with otherworld sanctions and ultimate causes. Yet no charge can be less grounded than

[46] From the *Li Chi* or "Book of Rites" revised by Confucius.

[47] From *Book of Odes,* similarly revised.

[48] *Analects,* II, 3.

[49] *Ibid.,* XIII, 4.

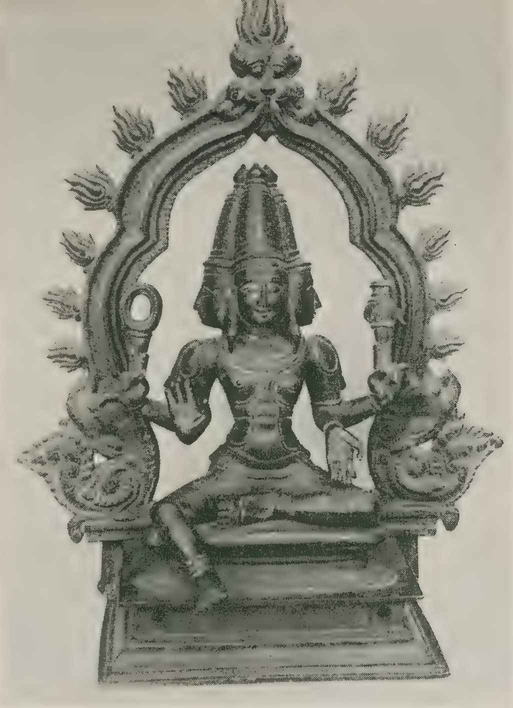

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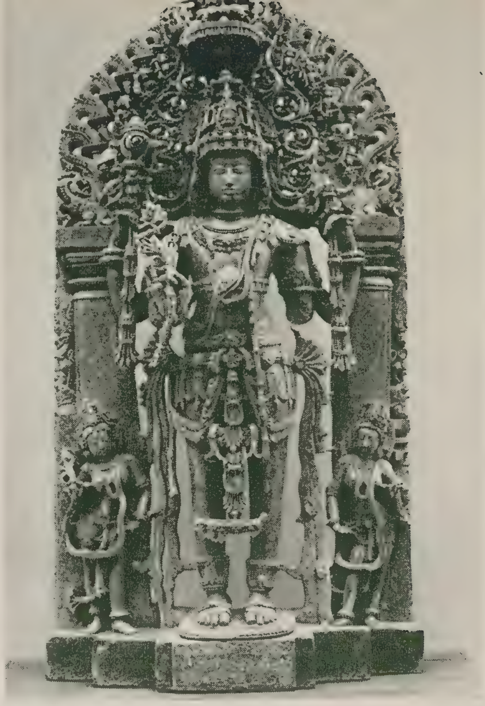
Fig. 9. BRAHMA. Originally a great god of the Indo-Aryans, he was transformed into the Alpha and Omega, the One Reality of monistic Indian philosophy.



METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Fig. 10. VISHNU. According to his attribute of savior, Vishnu is believed to incarnate himself at the crises of human history, appearing on earth in *avatars*. The *avatars* most famous in Hindu mythology are Krishna and Rama.

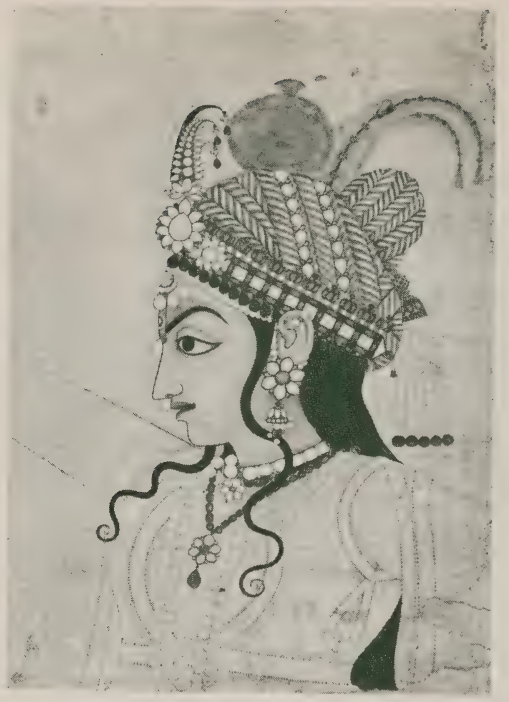


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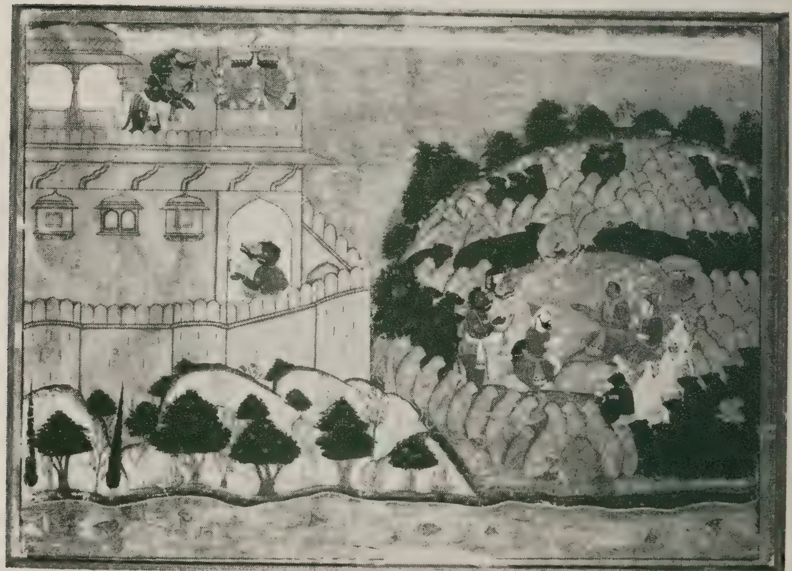
Fig. 11. KRISHNA. Among the most popular of Hindu gods, he is the hero of a lush mythology, as well as the prophet (in the epic *Mahabharata*) of the religion of *bhakti*.

Fig. 12. RAMA AT THE SIEGE OF LANKA. This is an episode in the *Ramayana*, most popular of Indian classics. Prince Rama, its hero, is worshiped as an *avatar* of Vishnu.



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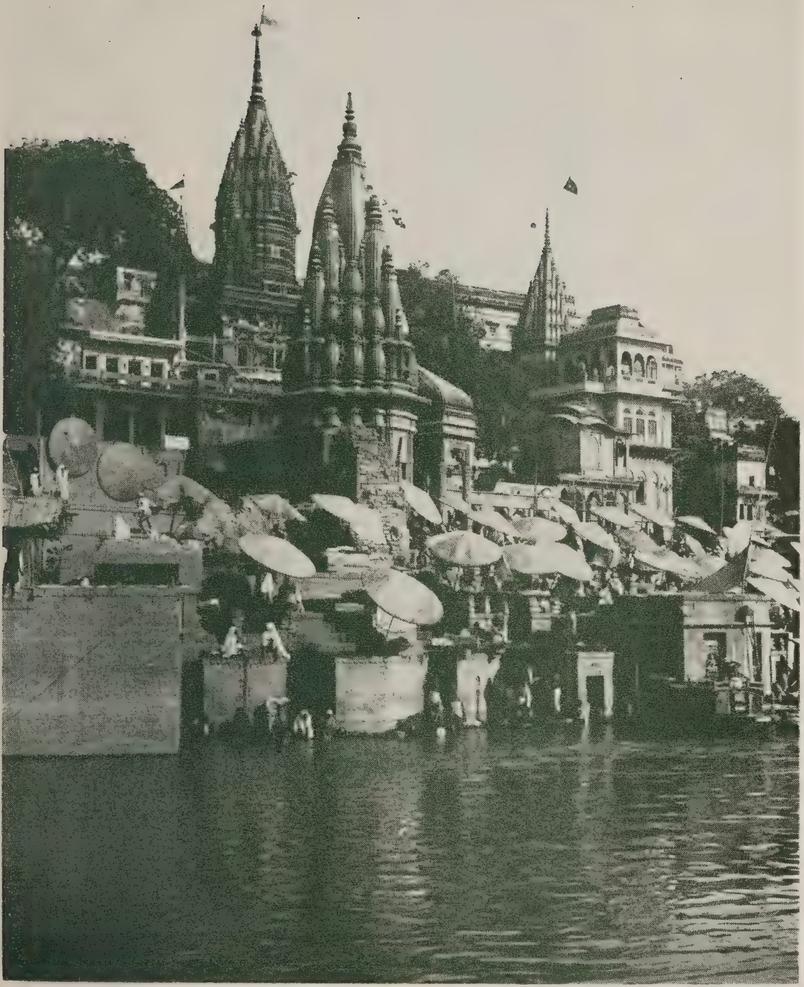
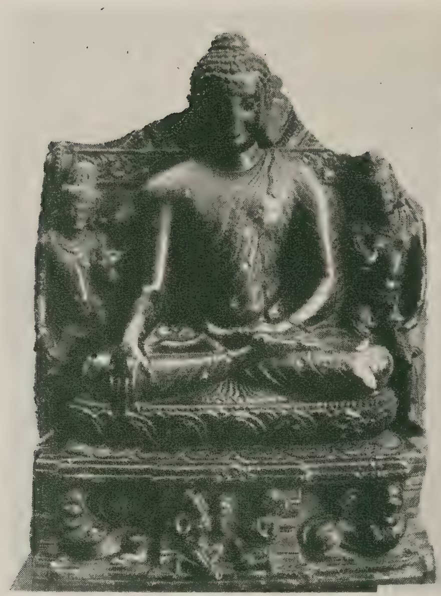


UNDERWOOD-STRATTON

Fig. 13. HINDUS PRAYING AND BATHING IN THE GANGES. To their holy city and sacred river millions of devout Hindus flock. They cremate their dead on the burning *ghats* that line the banks, casting the remains into the stream. They bathe and drink the waters of Ganges, confident of securing health of soul and body.



METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Fig. 14. BUDDHA. The spirit of Sakyamuni – pursuit of Nirvana's peace through the annihilation of all desire – is suggested by this serenely contemplative statue.

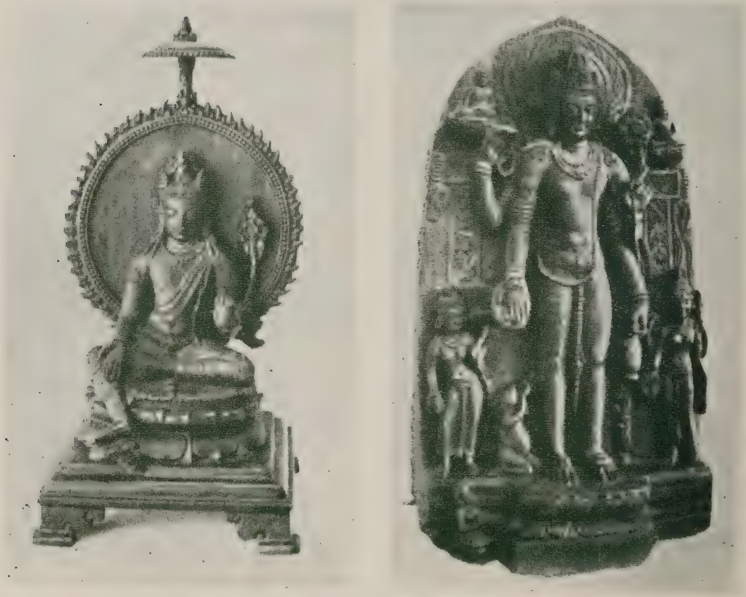


Fig. 15. AVALOKISTEVARA AND MAITREYA. In the imaginative Buddhist scripture Lotus of the True Law, the one appears as a boundlessly compassionate supernatural being; the other, as the Buddha of the future (or Messias). Both became objects of intense devotion to Buddhists of China and Japan.

that heard occasionally that he was personally atheistic and agnostic. For, first, the books (cf. p. 46 above), to which he referred as to an epitome of wisdom, distinctly inculcate religious beliefs. Secondly, as Giles remarks, he "uses the name of Tien in any suitable connection."[50] When he visited his leprous disciple, Po Niu, "he took his hand through the window and said: 'It is killing him. It is the will of Tien. But that such a man should have such a disease!'"[51] "At fifty," he says, "I understood the laws of Tien."[52] When his conduct was censured, he protested: "If I have done anything wrong, may Tien strike me dead," and on one occasion when his disciples wished him to pretend to be some high official he refused, for: "Should I thus impose on Tien?" Even his "superior man stands in awe of the ordinances of Tien, while the inferior man neither knows them nor stands in awe of them."[53] Confucius cites with approval the prayer of the emperor Tang: "I a child presume to offer a dark-colored victim and presume to announce to Thee, O most great and sovereign Tien, that the sinner I dare not pardon, and Thy ministers, O Tien, I do not keep in obscurity. The examination of them is in Thy hands, O Tien. If in my person I commit offenses, they are not to be attributed to the people. If the people commit offences, these offences rest on my person."[54] For the Imperial or Great Sacrifice, here spoken of, Confucius had the greatest reverence; indeed he viewed it as a cardinal but mysterious "sacrament" through which Heaven communicated to the emperor wisdom and courage for governing well and to the people a correlative spirit of submissiveness.[55]

The rest of the traditional creed of his contemporaries he did not call into question, and insofar as it touched matters of human relations he explicitly approved. Survival of the soul, cult of ancestors, spirits good and malignant, the practice of divination — all these he took for granted. It seemed reason enough to him that these things were part of the China of "the books," China of the ideal olden time. When asked to give a theoretic explanation of any point of traditional belief, e.g., the soul and its survival, he curtly declined with the aphorism: "If you cannot

[50] Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[51] *Analects*, VI, 8.

[52] *Ibid.*, II, 4.

[53] *Ibid.*, XVI, 5.

[54] *Ibid.*, XX, 3.

[55] *Ibid.*, III, 11, 12.

understand what is about you in every day life, how will yo understand mysterious things?"

Enthusiastic disciples, of whom some seventy or eighty ar named as especially close to him, kept alive the tradition of th sage and his teaching. To their devotion are due not only th *Analects* but, more importantly, the channeling of the mai stream of Chinese thinking into Confucian banks. Politics, philosophy, and religion all were molded by the Confucian tradition until after some centuries conformity with this tradition emerge as the accepted norm of orthodoxy in the theory and practic of all three departments. Despite the obscurity which cloaks th details of this process, certain landmarks and great names stan out. In a charmingly written vignette which goes by the nam of *The Mean in Action* (*Chung Yung*) Tzu Ssu portrayed th Confucian "superior man" ever solicitous to walk "the Way o Heaven and Earth" whether in private life or as a ruler.[56] Th *Great Learning* (its author is not known) demonstrated wit impeccable logic how the man who perfects his character b the Confucian code of "human-heartedness" will bring orde into his own family; how well-ordered families will spread "human-heartedness" throughout the whole country; how when thi happy result is achieved the prince will rule with the greates of ease—an ultra-optimistic program of living which ignores bot the unpredictable perversity of human nature and the complexit of organized society.

The first period of Confucianism, which Fr. Wieger has neatl named the Utopian, culminated in the teaching of Mang-tz (Mencius), 372–319 B.C. Fr. Wieger outlines this teachin as follows:

> Human nature tends to good just as water tends to flow downward. The superior man is he who has trained this spontaneou tendency in himself by the practice of equity, human-heartedness filial piety and by observance of proper rules of ceremony. Th pole-star of the state is the Emperor, for the people copy his example in their private and family lives and depend for thei

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[56] Tzu Ssu was Confucius' grandson. Another hand than his finished off th work with a synopsis of its argument and with a fervent appeal to the empero (presumably the redoubtable Hwangti of the third century B.C.) to change hi ways and rule on Confucian principles.

> prosperity on his minute supervision of the country's economic resources.[57]

Mencius was eager to break a dialectic lance with any philosopher who so much as looked askance at the Confucian system, and his vigorous polemics contributed as much to the propaganda for the Master's ideas as did his positive exposition. Mo-ti he assailed for making of "human-heartedness" an unreasonable altruism; Yang Chu for transforming the "superior man" into a self-centered perfectionist; Heu Hing for his doctrine that no man should eat or wear anything which he has not produced by his own labor—a theory inimical to the beautiful order of the Great Society. One remarkable fact is noted, namely that Mencius never clashed with his contemporary Chuang-tzu, who was doing for the doctrine of Lao-tze what Mencius was doing for that of Confucius.

Mencius could not abandon the spirits, since Confucius himself had approved popular belief in them, yet he rarely speaks of them. Tien, however, is constantly on his lips as Lawgiver, provident Overlord, and Sanctioner. "Our physical bodies in regard to shape and appearance are of the nature of Tien; but a man must be divinely inspired before he can adequately sustain that nature.—There are dignities of Tien and there are dignities of man. Human-heartedness, duty toward one's neighbors, loyalty and truth, these are the dignities of Tien. . . . Human-heartedness is the noblest gift of Tien. . . . Those who obey Tien are saved, while those who disobey perish. . . . Everything depends upon the will of Tien: therefore a man should accept submissively whatever can properly be ascribed thereto. . . . When Tien is about to confer a great office on any man, He first chastens that man's mind with suffering, and his sinews and bones with toul."[58] He multiplies examples of the heavenly pedagogy by which the illustrious emperors of the past were prepared for their office, and insists on the principle that the emperor does not rule by mere right of birth but by the election of Tien. Mencius' emperor truly would need divine assistance to bear the burden of duties which the philosopher lays upon him, especially in the matter of national economics. He must

[57] Wieger, L., S.J., *Histoire des Croyances Religieuses en Chine,* 1917.

[58] *The Book of Mencius,* VII, 1; VI, 15, and passim.

conserve natural resources, apportion land on an artificially logical plan, personally adjust schedules of "contributions" (Mencius abhorred the word "taxes"), maintain an ever normal granary.

The doctrines of Confucius and of Mencius center about "Tien, the personal intelligent Power who rules the universe."[59] They were succeeded by Hsuncius (320–235) who fathered a Confucianism emancipated from all divine control. There is no Tien, he taught, to rule the world, but everything in it evolves according to universal laws. There are no spirits to busy themselves in human affairs, hence it is vain for men to pray. Breaking with an immemorial Chinese belief, Hsuncius held that man's natural inclinations are toward evil, hence he must struggle to bring his conduct in line with reason. Shining examples are at hand in the "Sage Kings" (Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, and Duke Chou). Or, if rules are asked for, there is the whole of the Confucian ethical teaching. In brief, Hsuncius substituted agnostic and pragmatic foundations for the religious ones laid by Confucius himself, but left the whole superstructure of Confucianism intact. Hsuncius' influence was great and enduring on the minds of China's intellectuals.

Hsuncius was an old man of sixty-five when the mighty Hwangti extinguished the last glimmer of Chow power, and united China under a new dynasty (the Tsin, 255–206 B.C.) This incredible autocrat, who had a passion for getting things done, liked to have practical men about him — soldiers, administrators, road builders. Clashing early with the large and outspoken cast of the intellectuals, he was opposed and criticized until his patience broke down. Their principal armory was "the books," with whose teaching on government they were endlessly contrasting his innovations. So, in 213, he ordered all books, excepting those on agriculture, divination, and medicine, burned. In the same year he executed five hundred literati and banished other thousands. Before the book-burning decree could be thoroughly enforced, the severity of the misfortune for Chinese literature was mitigated by Hwangti's death in 210. Doubtless a portion of the old literature was irrevocably lost, but it is the considered judgment of such scholars as Legge that the really important classics escaped destruction. Furthermore, the illustrious Han Dynasty, which in 206 replaced the Tsin, patronized literature, and speedily repaired the damage caused by Hwangti's rage. The Hans, besides, accepted wholeheartedly the Confucianist theory of government. The Utopia dreamed of by the sage was not quite realized, but his principles had a fair and generally successful trial under these best of Chinese emperors.[60]

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[59] *The Religion of China*, by Rev. J. Mullie, in C.T.S., *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. I, p. 8.

After the collapse of the Han Dynasty in the third century A.D., China was divided for centuries into petty principalities. Confucianism was at a disadvantage, for its very polestar is the one emperor ruling in Tien's name over the Great State. Moreover, Confucianism had to struggle during this dark age against the rival systems of Taoism and Buddhism. Taoism originated almost in Confucius' own lifetime as a rival philosophy; allied itself in the first century B.C. with superstition and magic; borrowed in the third and fourth centuries of our era much doctrine and practice from Buddhism; finally emerged as a religion with considerably more glamour than the relatively austere Confucianism. Earliest seeds of Buddhism failed to germinate satisfactorily in Chinese soil, but by the third century A.D. the religion of Sakyamuni was beginning to flourish alongside native Confucianism and Taoism. Nevertheless, Confucianism weathered "the troubles" in sufficient vigor to be prepared for a fine renaissance in the twelfth century.

A dynasty called the Sung maintained itself precariously in south-central China from the tenth century until the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth. At the Sung court the literati found a refuge from the wars and the cultural decadence elsewhere prevalent, busying themselves with the classics and with Confucian philosophy. Among them arose a great master, whose interpretation of Confucianism was destined to dominate the intellect of China for seven centuries. This was Chu Hsi (1130–1200). He denied Tien, the soul, and all spirits. From eternal matter (*ki*) all beings are formed through the action of an eternal principle of order (*li*), differences in beings resulting wholly from the fineness or coarseness of the matter in which the principle of order works. There is no survival, for at death each man's portion of matter and of normative principle is reabsorbed into the eternal whole reservoir. Here Chu Hsi was influenced by Buddhist philosophy, just as in postulating his eternal principle of order he obviously borrows from Taoism. The cult of ancestors signifies only thankfulness for the act of generation. This is an inconsistency, for of course there are no ancestors surviving in another world whom one can thank. On morality Chu Hsi holds that "if action is in accord with natural propriety it is good; if in discord, it is non-good in consequence of its excess or deficit. The norm evolves in man into benevolence, justice, respect, discretion and loyalty."[61] Chu Hsi approves the whole of Confucian ethics on individual conduct, family relations, social intercourse, administration of government. He sees in Confucian ethics the ideal expression of eternal right order.

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[60] On Hwangti (alias Ching Wang) and the Hans, cf. p. 8 ff. above.

The Sung emperor Hsiao-tsung, by edict of 1178, condemned this neo-Confucianism as "a system of lies," and Chu Hsi died under a cloud. But the literati, instead of rolling up their sleeves and preparing for the death struggle with Jinghis Khan and his sons, intrigued at court until Li-tsung by decree of 1241 declared Chu Hsi's doctrine the ancient and approved Confucianism, and imposed it upon all examinees for state office. Kubilai Khan, who shortly after this date destroyed the Sungs, found the literati useful coadjutors in consolidating his Chinese Empire, and gave them a free hand to extend further Chu Hsi's influence. The great Mongol emperor built many temples to Confucius. The Mings, rising to power in 1368, made teaching of neo-Confucianism obligatory in all schools. The Manchus, as foreign dynasts, needed the good will of the educated classes, so interfered not at all with their pet philosophy, with the result that Confucius, as reflected by Chu Hsi's mirror, remained the light of China down to the Revolution.

The alliance of Confucianism with the state, or Political Confucianism, as we may call it, must be distinguished from Popular Confucianism. The sage would raise a polite eyebrow at both these children which history has laid at his feet — in the one case at atheistic and materialistic features, in the other at the deformities of superstition. Preceding chapters (6 and 7) have treated the complexity of popular cult; hence here only a brief résumé will be attempted, with the notice that all this lush polytheism

[61] Mullie, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

now claims the authority of China's famed prophet. There are, or rather were before the past decade's catastrophe, the state sacrifices, chief among them being that to Tien (Yuan Shih Kai offered it during his brief presidency of the Northern Republic, while the puppet emperor of Manchukuo offered it with the gracious permission of his Japanese masters). Other state sacrifices, all performed in the capital, and many also permitted to provincial governors in their territories, fall into three classes:

(Heaven) Earth, Imperial Ancestors, gods of millet and corn

Sun, Moon, Shen Nung the divine farmer, Sien Tsan a legendary empress who was first to breed silkworms, The Five Emperors, Confucius and Seventy Confucian Scholars, gods of the sky and earth, the planet Jupiter

Sie-ni or gods of healing, Kwan Yu the war-god, Wen Chang the god of literature, Huo Sin the god of fire, Ching Hwang or the gods of cities, Tungyo-shen the god of Mt. Tai Shen, Matsupo the goddess of water, etc.

Besides enjoining ancestor cult, the state three times a year orders rites throughout the land in honor of all the ancestral spirits. Throughout China in countless shrines and temples popular gods are worshiped in icons of wood, stone, clay, copper, bronze, and paper. The gods are believed to dwell in these icons as well as in mere tablets inscribed with the god's name. Images of the dragon, the tiger, the fox, and of other animals are likewise worshiped. Divination flourishes in the temples by cryptic writing on bamboo sticks or by their position when cast down. Feast days bring processions, theatrical performances, and puppet shows. Ritual is highly developed, following, in general, the codification of rites drawn up in Han times. Popular religion is under the care of priests (called *Wu*), who also are assiduous in exorcising demons and on occasion can simulate divine seizures during which they utter "revelations."

9. Lao-tze and the Religion of Tao

LAO-TZE, Lao-tzu, or Lao-tan is honored as founder of the second of China's three major religions.[62] There are two traditions about him. The first claims that he was archivist from 781 to 771 B.C. to the Chow emperor Yeou, a tradition which gives him the names of Lao-tze (or -tzu) and Pai-yang-fou. The other tradition asserts that he held a similar office from 519 to 476 under the Chow emperor King. Whichever person he may have been, biographical details are very meager. Confucianists maintain that their patriarch once visited him, but Confucius himself never mentions Lao-tze or his teaching. Taoists say that Lao-tze, disgusted at bad government in his homeland, departed for the west and was never heard of more. Taoists also absurdly allege that he journeyed to India, where he founded Buddhism—an etiological story thought up to justify Taoism's shameless borrowing of Buddhist doctrine and practice.

A book, the *Tao Te Ching* (*Authoritative Book on the Way and Its Distinctive Power*) was long attributed to him, but "today scholarly opinion tends to regard it as the work of a much later mind (late fourth century B.C.?) and indeed as a very composite work, containing old fragments embedded in much later contexts It looks very much like a textbook put into the hands of Taois disciples when they came to learn the Way from a master."[63] Tao in translation, means the Way, but in sense it includes both the starting point and the terminus. Precise definition appears impossible, but the book just named offers a description:

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[62] *Lao-tze* means "Old Philosopher"; *Lao-tan,* "Old Child"; *Lao Tzu* appear to be a name given to the *Tao Te Ching,* but transferred to its supposed author

[63] E. R. Hughes in *Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times* (New York: E. P Dutton, 1942), p. 144.

> Before heaven and earth were produced,
> There was Something, without form and yet all complete.
> Silent! Empty!
> Sufficient unto itself! Unchanging!
> Moving everything, but never exhausted.
> This indeed might well be the mother of all below heaven.
> We do not know its real name, to classify it.
> That we may have it in writing, we say Tao (the Way).
> If we have to classify it, we say "Supreme."[64]

By putting away all thoughts, emotions, and interests except Tao, man walks in Tao as the way and arrives at Tao as the goal:

> Go on to the limit of emptiness:
> Hold fast to the stability of stillness.
> For all things were made by one process,
> And, as our eyes demonstrate to us, they all turn back.
> They may flourish abundantly,
> But each turns and goes home to the root from which it came.
> Home to the root, home, I affirm, to the stillness.
> This means, to turn back is destiny;
> And the destiny of turning back, I affirm, can never be changed.[65]

Does the returning to Tao imply annihilation of individual personality? The answer is unclear in the *Tao Te Ching,* even though in one place (Chap. 33) survival might be read into the phrase: "To die and not be lost, this is the real blessing of long life." However, whether return into Tao means survival or annihilation, Tao itself is a concept so alien to Chinese tradition and thought that borrowing from some foreign intellectual milieu is suggested. Attention naturally turns to the concept of *Atman* ("Real and Only Person"), which dominated the thinking of India's philosophers, for a likely prototype of Tao. Both are proposed as start and finish of all phenomenal existences; both are extolled as the bright and glorious and only reality; to grow in knowledge of them and to seek assimilation into them are considered the only worth-while human occupations. Such parallels between Tao and Atman do not prove to a certainty the debt of the *Tao Te Ching* to India's *Upanishads,* but they do make it arguable. Communications between India and China were sufficiently developed at the time to permit commerce even in such wares as monisti philosophy.[66]

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[64] *Tao Te Ching,* Chap. 25, tr. by E. R. Hughes, *op. cit.,* p. 153.
[65] *Ibid.,* Chap. 16, pp. 151, 152.

Tao must be left to work out its course unhindered by fuss interference. With regard to your own affairs, the concerns c other men, the government of the people, the *Tao Te Ching* offe the advice which was offered to little Bo Peep: "Leave them alon and they'll come home." This is the "nameless Simplicity" tha sets all things right, the "non-action that accomplishes everythin without doing it" (Chaps. 37, 47). For

> The business of the Tao is one of day by day dealing with les
> Yes, dealing with less and less until you arrive at inaction.
> If you practice inaction, nothing will be left undone.[67]

A bit inconsistently with this ideal of inaction, the expert Taois is said to be "kind, courageous, thrifty, generous" (Chap. 67 Certain portions of the book date themselves in the era (fourt century A.D. probably) when Taoism had grown into a stron rival of Confucianism. The latter's moral code, political theor and meticulous legalism all draw the writer's sarcastic fire.

> Away with these sages! Away with these wise men!
> The profit to the people will be a hundred per cent.
> Away with these human-hearted men! Away with these just me
> The people will turn back to filial piety and kindness.[68]
>
> Ritual only goes skin-deep,
> And is thus the starting-point of moral anarchy.[69]

Inaction solves all governmental problems. For, if the peopl are left to their innate goodness and to the working of Tao, orde and happiness are bound to emerge. A promising emperor migh speak as follows in his coronation address:

> The more taboos there are in society,
> The poorer the people will be:
> The more weapons the people have,
> The greater will the darkness of evil be over state and family
> The more forms of skill men have,

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[66] Wieger, L., S.J., in *D.A.F.C.*, Vol. I, col. 526, conjectures that the legen of Lao-tze going to India and founding Buddhism is a garbled account of Taoism borrowing of Indian thought.

[67] *Tao Te Ching*, Chap. 48, tr. by Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

[68] *Ibid.*, Chap. 19, pp. 151, 152.

[69] *Ibid.*, Chap. 38, p. 157.

The more monstrous inventions there will be:
The more laws there are promulgated,
The more thieves and robbers there will be.
Hence, let me do nothing and the people will transform themselves.[70]

Just let the government be blunt and inactive, and the people will be happy and prosperous. Above all, the folk must be kept in a bovinelike simplicity:

The sage's form of government
Empties the people's minds and fills their stomachs,
Weakens their ambitions and strengthens their bones,
Unfailingly makes the ordinary man ignorant and passionless.[71]

Finally, the *Tao Te Ching* is unalterably pacifist, for "where soldiers are, there thorns and brambles grow."

Chuang Chou (late fourth and early third centuries B.C.) ranks as the Mencius of Taoism by virtue of his synthesis of the doctrine in the *Chuang-tzu*. A clever dialectician as well as a poet, he weaves the aphorisms of the *Tao Te Ching* into a philosophy, but offers for the most part only striking metaphors as proofs. To Tao, which was before Heaven and Earth and from which they proceeded, "the zenith is not high nor the nadir low: no point of time is long ago, nor by lapse of ages has Tao itself grown old." All but Tao is the stuff of dreams, hence the advice: "Rest in inaction and the world will be good of itself. Cast your slough. Spit forth intelligence. Ignore all differences. Become one with the infinite. Release your mind. Free your soul. Be vacuous. Be nothing." Chuang Chou seems to be the first Taoist who associated with this freeing of the soul the power of transcending nature's limitations and working all manner of marvels—an association which became the theoretic basis of the magic art practiced by Taoist priests. This pretense of preternatural powers parallels the claims of the ancient Indian Yoga, and may be another indication of Taoism's debt to India.

Mighty Hwangti (middle third century B.C.) in old age sought the good offices of Taoist divines in hope of escaping death. For these gentlemen were already concocting their infamous elixir of life, which was later to prove its potency by prematurely dispatching several imperial dupes to the goodly company of the ancestors. Under the officially Confucian Han dynasts, Taoism yet contrived to evolve from a conventicle cult of interest to only a few into an important rival of the state religion. Certain high lights stand out in its rather obscure progress. From 133 to 112 B.C. the Emperor Ou patronized the sect, encouraging its alchemy (lead turned into gold), its elixir of life (his son and heir-apparent died of the draught), its spirit messages, its curse manual for bringing misfortune and death on enemies. He even offered sacrifice on Mount Tai Shan to the Supreme One (a personalized concept of Tao which the sect had by this time introduced as a counterpart of Tien). Shortly before our era Emperors Siuen and Nai granted official approval to Taoism's magical practices, shrines, and sacrifices. In A.D. 166 Emperor Hoan built in his capital a temple to Lao-tze, and prescribed in it sacrifices to the Old Philosopher which were of the same type as those offered to Tien.

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[70] *Ibid.*, Chap. 57, p. 160.
[71] *Ibid.*, Chap. 3, p. 146.

During the dissolution of the Han Empire Taoism prepared for the troublous times ahead by the organization of secret societies, especially the powerful Yellow Hats, which by intrigue and terrorism were to seek political control. In the bosom of one of these secret societies arose the legend on which is based the Taoist "Papacy." The story goes that toward the end of the first century A.D. Lao-tze appeared to a certain Tchang-lou and communicated to him esoteric knowledge and occult powers. When in the fifth century the Yellow Hats decided to organize a Taoist hierarchy, they turned back the clock by claiming the worthy just mentioned as their first "pope" and manufacturing a genealogy to support the fiction. Present-day Taoists assert, with wonderful historical ingenuousness, that their "pope" is a lineal descendant of Tchang-lou.

During the four centuries (third to seventh) following the Han collapse Taoist priests fought a two-front war against the literati who held to the Confucian tradition and against the Buddhist bonzes who were popularizing in China a religion which was distinctly more satisfying to man's needs and desires than Taoism's mixture of superstition and intangible philosophy.[72] The man who in 618 partially reunited China, Kaotsou, bid for Taoist support during his advance to power, and the divines of the sect obligingly discovered that he was a lineal descendant of Lao-tze. The fantastic genealogy helped him not a little, but hopes of imperial patronage were speedily dashed when his son and successor Taitsong issued decrees restrictive of Taoist practices. The Tangs (as the new emperors called themselves) dealt with religion according to political expediency, smiling now on one, now on another of the three major religions, as well as courting the good will of Zoroastrians, Nestorians, and Moslems.

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[72] The Buddhism brought to China was of the Mahayana type, which taught a doctrine of good works and merit for heaven, had numerous appealing "saints," practiced a splendid liturgy and numerous popular devotional exercises.

Aware of Buddhism's intrinsic superiority, Taoist priests had met the challenge by borrowing freely from the ritual, the doctrine, and the monastic practice of the foreign religion. Lao-tze's ethereal doctrine had thus undergone by the tenth century a transformation hardly paralleled in the history of other religions. Taoism now stood for an hierarchy under one nominal head, for a monasticism modeled on Sakyamuni's *Samgha* ("Community or Brotherhood"), for a widely popular occultism under the forms of divination and prophecy, magic potion and alchemy, curse and charm. The final transformation was effected early in the eleventh century on the following interesting occasion. The Sung emperor Tchen, acquainted with the Shintoism of Japan which taught the island emperor's descent from Amaterasu the sun-goddess, ambitioned for himself a divine genealogy. He began to have visions and revelations to this purport and received a mysterious parchment dropped from the sky. All evidence points him out as a shameless imposter. The Taoist priests, expert in all such humbuggery, were his spiritual fathers during these mystical experiences, and now satisfied the dearest imperial wish by working out Tchen's divine genealogy. His family descended from the Pure August One (that is, from the personalized Tao). Lao-tze was assigned the functions of a kind of "Logos" intermediary between the Pure August One and the emperor, while a host of ancient Chinese worthies were brevetted as genii, serving as courtiers in heaven and potent on earth. The new system flattered imperial vanity, so that the Confucian literati protested in vain. In 1115 Emperor Hoei tried to conciliate them as well as the dissident Buddhists. By decree he proclaimed that the Pure August One was no other than Shang Ti and that the new religion was none else than China's ancient religion. Buddha and his disciples were by another decree ranked as genii in the new heaven, while the bonzes were ordered to affiliate their monasteries with those of the Taoists. The audacious attempt to railroad China into the Taoist camp finally failed because of the quiet opposition of the Buddhist spirit, the reorganization of Confucianism effected by Chu Hsi, the conquest of the country by the Mongols. Nevertheless, this eleventh-century formulation of doctrine has remained a part of "orthodox" Taoism.

It is hard to detect in the full-blown Taoism of our own times any elements of higher religious thought or emotion. Its polytheism is a rank and repellent growth, *indigenas et alienigenas, coelestes, terrestres, infernos, marinos, fontanos, fluviales, mares et feminas, certos atque incertos,* as Augustine says of the gods of the Romans.[73] There is really no cult of the personalized Tao (the Supreme One or Pure August One). Whatever hegemony is exercised in heaven has been arrogated to the Pearly Emperor.[74] About him heaven has been organized on the model of the Chinese Empire, so that there is a little or big god to care for every detail of administration of earthly affairs. The bribery to which centuries of corrupt officialdom has accustomed the Chinese is understood to be just as necessary to get action from the host of divine officials. And here precisely the Taoist "holy men" make their profits, for through their hands pass the monetary and other gifts of the hoodwinked people. They write out and sell charms potent in every contingency, "bills of forgiveness" which when burned take away sin. They collect contributions from whole districts to finance great seasonal sacrifices to crop-gods, rain-gods, and so on, and for emergency sacrifices which the sect's diviners announce as necessary. The Heavenly Teacher (Taoist "pope") terrifies demons with the sword of his great "ancestor" Tchang-lou and confines them in battles for a price, proclaims new gods, appoints "bishops and abbots, priests and deacons." Abbots wear robes of the richest gold embroidery. Priests wear blue garments and do their hair in a bun surmounted with a yellow cap.

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[73] *De Civitate Dei,* Lib. III, Cap. 12.

[74] In theory the Pearly Emperor is outranked by the Taoist Triad or Three Holy Ones (Lao-tze, The Ancient Original, The Spiritual Precious, the latter two being purely imaginary beings). The Pearly Emperor originated in the twelfth century A.D., when this title was conferred on the magician Chang Ye. Probably to countervail the Yellow Emperor of Confucianism, the new myth made of the Pearly Emperor an old emperor who for his philanthropy and knowledge of Tao was raised to heaven and put in charge of gods and men.

10. The Light of Asia Shines in China

THE lives of Confucius, Lao-tze, and Sakyamuni were nearly contemporary, but it was to be many centuries before the religious impulses emanating from the last named would reach China. Asoka, the Constantine of Buddhist tradition, speaks in his famous rock inscriptions of dispatching missionaries to promote Buddhist ideas in lands beyond India's borders, and this assertion may dovetail with the Chinese legend that in 217 B.C. eighteen Buddhist teachers arrived at Hsi An. Puissant Panchao (cf. p. 9 above) led his armies to the borders of India through countries already Buddhized, while it is only reasonable to surmise that along the trade routes which he thus opened commerce in ideas as well as in material wares would have flowed. However, legends and surmises aside, the first attested entry of Buddhist doctrine occurred in A.D. 65, when the Indian scribes Kasyapa and Gobharana came by invitation of Emperor Ming Ti to Loyang his capital city. There in the White Horse Monastery they discreetly satisfied the religious curiosity of their royal host and his courtiers, but more importantly wrote a very clever apologia of Sakyamuni's religion. The work follows closely the style of the Confucian *Analects*, plays up Buddhist teachings which are akin to Confucianism and Taoism, touches lightly on those teachings which are strange or offensive to Chinese mentality. After the death of She Moteng and Ku-fa-lan (the Chinese names of the two Indian savants), the White Horse Monastery was dark for seventy years until the "Parthian prince," Anshikao, took up residence there, to resume the literary labors of these two Indian scholars. Unbelievably industrious, he translated into Chinese more than a hundred and fifty Buddhist books, mostly of the Mahayanist school (explained fully later, pp. 220–223). Through him China was introduced to Amitabha ("Omito Fo" in translation) who rules over blissful souls in the Western Paradise and who as Avalokitesvara ("Kwanyin" to the Chinese, who later transformed him into a goddess) dwells on earth and hears men's prayers.

At Loyang, until the opening of the fourth century, the work of engrafting the foreign shoot on the native religious tree was carried forward by the writings of the White Horse bonzes. The strength of the movement is attested by controversies in which they maintained Buddhism's superiority to Confucianism's cold formalism and Taoism's traffic in magic. Two translations of Indian classics powerfully appealed to native religious sentiment. In the first of these, *Lotus of the Good Law,* universal salvation through Sakyamuni's merits is promised, while the *Ullambana Sutra* adapts the Buddhist doctrine of merit to China's inveterate ancestor cult. The merits interestingly are those of the bonzes. Sakyamuni's reply to Moggalana, one of his early disciples who wished to secure his mother's release from penitential duress in the hereafter, is the following:

> Nothing can help thy parents, except my monks. They only can work on her behalf. This must thou do. On the fifteenth day of the seventh month go, offer a rich gift of food and drink, of garments and other choice offerings to the Brethren. They are a field of merit, in which if thou soweth thou shalt reap a rich harvest, and shalt help thy dead to the seventh generation.

This doctrine, supremely satisfying to a people so solicitous for the dead, has worked out in practice in the millions of "masses for the dead" which yearly are offered in Chinese Buddhist monasteries. To keep the record straight, there is about the same similarity between Catholic Mass and these Buddhist services as between Sunday Mass at St. Patrick's or St. Dominic's and the "divine worship" held at the same hour at the Methodist church in the next block.

Political upheavals forced the White Horse monks to transfer the center of their activities from Loyang to Singan in north-central China. Hither, in 383, was brought as a captive from a raid to the westward the scholar Kumarajiva, who spent many years in translating Buddhist scriptures, among them Ashvaghosa's *Life of the Master* and *The Net of Brahma.* The fruit of the centuries of translation reached the amazing total of two thousand volumes by the sixth century.[75] Every shade of Buddhist thought was represented, and when we recall that this thought had developed as unchecked as a tropical forest for a thousand years, we appreciate what a welter of concepts these translations contained. Buddhism could not hope to consolidate its Chinese conquests unless some degree of order replaced this confusion, unless creed and practice were simplified and defined. Relatively successful in effecting such an organization of Buddhism's forces were the three schools of Tamo, Chi-i, and Tantrism. Tamo (or Bodhidharma) caused a sensation in China by his fierce and piercing gaze, his churlish manners, his curt and stern aphorisms. A Primitive Buddhist, he disliked all the gods and ceremonies and speculative philosophies with which Buddhism had become entangled; considered all such only a return to the ignorance from which Sakyamuni had escaped in his Enlightenment. He had just one message to China:

> The heart is Buddha. Outside of it there is no reality. Apart from thought all is unreal. There is neither cause nor effect apart from the mind and heart. Nirvana itself is a state of the heart. See in thyself the true Buddha-nature, know that thou art Buddha and canst not sin. There is neither good nor bad, but only the heart, and this is Buddha and impeccable. One sin only is there, to be ignorant of thy own Buddhahood. This ignorance it is which makes the wheel of transmigration to rotate. It is enlightenment which destroys the power of Karma. The enlightened can neither sin nor be reborn. O heart of man, so great that thou canst embrace the world, so little that thou canst not be touched by a needle's point—thou art Buddha. That is my word to China.[76]

This is easily recognizable as the elusive pseudo-mysticism of the Hindu Vedantists and of the Hinayana Buddhists—that individual selfhood is an illusion, that the sole reality is Atman ("The Self" or "The Person") or, as the Hinayanists call it, "The Buddha" ("The Enlightened One"). Probably, too, this is the genuine doctrine of Sakyamuni himself. At any rate,

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[75] Many of the original Sanskrit and Pali texts have been lost, so that the Chinese translations are the only extant vehicles of much of early Buddhism's thought.

[76] Translated by L. Wieger, S.J., in *Histoire des Croyances Religieuses en Chine*, p. 520.

Tamo's teaching became the basis of the quietist Chan School, a school of thought popular enough among Chinese bonzes and other intellectuals. Chan Buddhists refuse to explain and to argue, for enlightenment comes not by these means, but merely by intuition. All things, according to them, are (parts of) Buddha, and the poetry of the school which develops this thought has a Wordsworthian beauty.

A devoted pupil of Tamo was the Chinese Chi-i. The master's monism he accepted wholeheartedly, but set himself the difficult task of vindicating this monism not by an appeal to unreasoning intuition but by a complex system of philosophy. His arguments, drawn from a wide range of Buddhist books and strung together with great ingenuity, are fanciful and arbitrary. To his credit it must be noted that he earnestly urged morality (though it has really no basis in his system of philosophy). Moreover, he approved an attitude of religious devotion toward the all-in-all Buddha (though again quite inconsistently with his philosophy).

The appeal of Tamo obviously was to mystically inclined natures, that of Chi-i to those with a bent toward speculation. Both contributed to the theory of Chinese Buddhism. The practice and the faith of the millions are rather independent of these two thinkers and their schools. What the people embrace is a species of Mahayana Buddhism[77] — a system which promises universal salvation, worships Sakyamuni and many others as gods, teaches a doctrine of merit and demerit, caters to religiosity by staging theatrical ceremonies and encouraging all manner of superstitious practices. Omito Fo still rules in his Western Paradise, but the belief in transmigration has created a Hell (more properly a Purgatory) to punish criminals of deeper die before they pass into their next bodies. In the matter of merits and demerits, centuries of paganism have blunted consciences. There are catalogues of meritorious and demeritorious works with credit and debit points against each item, but missionaries tell us that a Chinaman will hardly own up to personal sin. He is willing enough, especially when he falls under misfortune, to perform such superstitious penitential works as burning incense before his idol or paying the bonzes to pray for him, but he balks at toiling up the spiritual hills of contrition, satisfaction, and resolve to amend. Then, too, he is taught concerning the magnanimous vows made by the great *Bodhisattvas*[78] to apply their unlimited merits to everybody's salvation. If still the ghost of sin haunt him, he has always the neighboring monastery whose Brethren are a rich field of merit ready to be worked. A shoat or a basket of vegetables left with the porter will feed the "holy craytures" and release the flood of their merits for the washing away of sin.

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[77] Hinayana means the "Little Vehicle" and stands for the ascetic and contemplative ideal of Sakyamuni, namely the mortification of all desires, and the unselfing which leads to absorption in nirvana. Mahayana or the "Great Vehicle," is the way of universal salvation through the merits of Bodhisattvas.

The Bodhisattva character of unlimited benevolence is the attribute most emphasized in the gods. Countless they are, since the Mahayana even before its entrance into the land had reabsorbed the Hindu Gods and in China itself opened its Pantheon to indigenous deities (among them Confucius himself and the Taoists' Pearly Emperor). Yao Shih Fo is an immensely popular healing-god, and in the temples the sick crowd to touch their afflicted members to the corresponding members of his wooden statue. A favorite motif of art is Titsang surrounded by children, whom he protects and snatches from Hades. Kwanyin is a goddess whom writers on China myopically compare to the Blessed Virgin because she is often represented holding an infant and because of the people's confidence in her unlimited benevolence.

Temples, of which there is at least one in every town, are crowded with idols before which devotees burn incense and candles and make all kinds of offerings. Bonzes officiate at "masses" for the dead and other services, reading Buddhist scriptures and chanting to the accompaniment of gongs and drums. There is a purificatory rite which inept comparative religionists liken to Christian Baptism. The magic name of Omito Fo is ceaselessly repeated as a response to the bonzes' prayers and as beads are told by the devout. Charms for every contingency are sold, as are also images of favorite patron gods. Among the bonzes—yellow-robed and shaven-pated—scholarship for the most part is at a low ebb and discipline relaxed, though occasionally an abbot of the better sort is found who keeps his house in order. Within the past hundred years the huge torpid body of Buddhist monasticism has begun to stir uneasily in its sleep. The humiliation of the wars with the western nations and with Japan, the challenge of western culture and of Christianity have produced uneasy dreams of the old times when a disciplined and learned Samgha was a real power for civilization.

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[78] Bodhisattvas are ancient Buddhists of heroic self-denial.

JAPAN

11. Early Japan and the Japanese People

THE peninsula of Kamchatka juts out into the north Pacific from the continent of Asia. About sixteen hundred miles to the south protrudes the peninsula of Korea. Between their tips lies the great arc of the Japanese Islands with its convex toward the east. The arc consists of four major islands — Jezo, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu — and myriad smaller islands. Their total area adds up to somewhat less than that of the states of Missouri and Kansas. This is the Japan of history prior to the half century of aggression which began with the seizure of Formosa in 1895. It will no doubt be the Japan to survive after the Allies have written the peace treaty. From north to south on the major islands stretches a mountain range, rising at times to such lofty heights as Mt. Fujiyama's twelve thousand odd feet. Many of the peaks are volcanic, and their eruptions have combined with seismic disturbances to write a record of natural catastrophe scarcely paralleled in other lands. Geophysicists believe that the chief center of seismic activity is the Tuscarora Deep, which is one of the greatest ocean depths and parallels Japan's eastern coast line. One curious effect is the gradual but definite uptilting of the eastern seaboard with a corresponding sinking of the western.

Rivers and lakes are numerous, and human ingenuity has for centuries harnessed this natural resource for farming by terracing and canal-building, and more recently for power by the construction of hydroelectric dams. Backbreaking toil and a low standard of living are the heritage of the people. For the food supply of the dense population can come only from fishery and the intensive cultivation of the island's meager acreage. The myopic policy of the shogunate also contributed toward fastening the fashion of the ultra-simple life on the land, since through fear and jealousy of foreigners they closed Japan's splendid ports to trade, even forbidding the building of ocean-going ships. The change of policy which followed the overthrow of the shogunate (1868) opened the door to foreign trade and modernization, but the progress attained served as an opiate to stimulate the dream of imperialistic expansion through aggressive militarism. Now the dream has disintegrated in fire and blood. Terrible as Japan's defeat has been and long-lived as may be the suspicion and hatred of her neighbors, patriotism and a racial capacity for endurance and hard work may be expected to win through, first, to economic reconstruction, then, to a renewal of normal international relations.

The late unlamented propaganda bureau of the former Reich referred to the Japanese as Aryans of the East. The phrase is an echo of a racistic fiction very dear to Japan's own propagandists. In the *Teacher's Manual of National History for Primary Schools* the doctrine of race superiority is thus defined:

> We people who are under such an august royal family are mostly the descendants of the kami who have their beginning in the kami of the five departments who came down into Japan in the train of the Imperial Grandson, or we are the descendants of the successive generations of Emperors beginning with Emperor Jimmu. In addition there are descendants of those who were naturalized from China and Korea. In addition there are other races such as the Ezo and the Kumaso which lived in Japan from very ancient times, but they were assimilated into our nation at an early date.[1]

Scientific ethnology teaches more soberly that the Ainus first inhabited the islands in the Neolithic Age, though there are some indications of a still more primitive strata of aborigines whom the Ainus themselves replaced. Sufficient evidence identifies the Ainus themselves as the easternmost branch of the long-headed people whose remains are found in Stone Age sites through Europe and Asia. Ainus were and still remain (in the north of the Nipponese Archipelago) distinct in type from

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[1] *Teacher's Manual,* Vol. I, trans. by D. C. Holton in *The National Faith of Japan* (London: Kegan Paul, 1938), p. 131.

Japanese in color, shape of eyes, and abundant hirsuteness of face and body. As late as 1670 the race was powerful enough to rise in major revolt against the authority of the shoguns. Ainu archaeology testifies to belief in survival after death, but the finds throw no further light on the race's ancient religion. Nowadays they acknowledge Nish, a Supreme Being domiciled in the upper firmament. He is invoked in prayer on special occasions, but since he is mysterious and remote and anyway has committed mundane affairs to the *kamui* (spirits), these latter are the recipients of the everyday cult. Of interest is the annual bear sacrifice of a cub captured in the spring and fattened, to be shown extravagant religious reverence in the autumn and finally immolated.[2]

From Indonesia to the south along a facile water route came Proto-Malays to contribute a second racial element. These were Southern Mongols whose center of diffusion through Indonesia was the Malay Peninsula. A. H. Keane thus summarizes their general physical characteristics: skull brachycephalic with jaws slightly projecting and cheekbones prominent; eyes black and oblique; nose generally small and straight but with wide nostrils; hair lank and black; color yellowish to olive brown; stature small and bodily structure slender. The migratory habits of the Proto-Malayans produced only such arts as were indispensable—weaving, for instance, simple pottery, and rather clever boatbuilding. In religion they were obsessed by fear of evil spirits and witches, and indulged in numerous charms and spells. Lycanthropy was believed in, as were numerous myths centering about the doings of the spirits. Traces of belief in a supreme being have been discovered by scholars, but his influence on religious practice was very meager. Malayan religion was influenced by Hinduism and Mohammedanism, but for the most part only superficially.

Polynesians, who constitute Japan's third racial strain, moved in from the myriad islands of the Pacific. Taller by several inches than Indonesians, they were dolichocephalic (longheaded), with light brown skin and black, straight hair. Though the wide extent of Polynesian migration had made them expert seamen, they readily adapted themselves to a settled life, becoming good agriculturists and carrying to a high level the arts of making mats, baskets, and bark cloth. A hereditary noble or chieftain caste was sharply marked off from the general population and seems to stem from a remote conquest of an earlier Polynesian people by a later. There flourished in the noble caste the "sacramental" ceremony of kava drinking as well as secret societies of a religious significance. Divinities were the ghosts of ancestors and relatives in general, together with numerous nature-gods. The position held by the supreme being was about the same as among the Indonesians. Magical rites and an oral mythology further debased religion.

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[2] Cf. A. H. Keane, *Man Past and Present* (Cambridge U. Press, 1920), p. 294 ff.—Rev. J. M. Martin in C.T.S., *Studies in Comparative Religion,* Vol. I, p. 21, interprets the bear sacrifice as a rite to secure a successful hunt. It may have a totemic significance.

Propagandist history has greatly obscured the date at which the race which finally became dominant in the Japanese Islands crossed over from the Asian mainland. Until 1945 school children were taught that the accession of the conqueror Jimmu Tenno occurred in 660 B.C. and Jimmu, moreover, was said to have been fourth in descent from the Imperial Grandson who led the kami down from heaven to found the Japanese race, and each of his three predecessors reigned for thousands of years. Thus far the legendary chronology. Now, Jimmu was probably an historical chieftain and a protagonist in the work of subjugating the islands and unifying government. But his regnal dates are arrived at in the official chronology by assigning reigns of impossible length to the emperors who intervened between him and the period when Chinese records afford scientific checks. Père Martin conjectures that Jimmu Tenno, and hence the beginning of Japanese monarchy, belongs in the third century A.D.[3]

Confirmatory of this late date for the unification of Japan are the annals of the Chinese Han Dynasty which record trade and diplomatic relations with the islands up to A.D. 246 and know of them as ruled by a number of petty kings. Turning to Japanese written "history," we meet two conditions which counsel great reserve in acceptance of the record. The first is that these documents (the *Kojiki, Nihongi,* and *Kujiki*) are of late date; the second, that they were compiled with an apologetic purpose. On both points the summation of D. C. Holtom may be borrowed:

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[3] *Op. cit.,* p. 23.

> Critical investigation shows that the material that has gone into the compilation of the Kojiki and the Nihongi was probably first committed to writing just before and just after the Great Reform of Taika (A.D. 645–701) and, as already stated, edited into existing form in the early part of the eighth century. As might be expected, these literary sources are deeply colored by the political movements of the periods in which the compilations were made. In particular they reflect the interests of the dynastic centralization of the Taika Reform based, as it was, on the political affirmation of the doctrine of Divine Imperial sovereignty and patterned, on the institutional side, after Chinese administrative models.[4]

Shortly before (p. 17) the author shows that the third important historical work, the *Kujiki,* was compiled at the same period and under the same tendentious influence as the two just named.

An all-powerful government had forbidden Japanese scholars, even in the milieu of intellectual progress of the past three quarters of a century, to rewrite early history according to scientific canons. Meanwhile foreign scholars, though at obvious disadvantage, have made some contributions toward objective history. They have discovered important clues in a chain of ancient grave sites stretching from the center of the main island (Honshu) southwestwardly to the southern tip of Kyushu. Two distinct grave forms, the barrow and the dolmen, are met with all along the chain.[5] In their furniture the barrows differ as completely from the dolmens as does the Bronze Age Hall in a museum from the Iron Age Hall, so that "no iron weapon nor any machine-made pottery occurs in a barrow; no bronze weapon nor any handmade pottery in a dolmen."[6] So sharp a distinction between finds, which are respectively quite numerous and whose sites are coincident, argues strongly that a Bronze Age culture (the Ainus were definitely New Stone Age) was imported into Japan and flourished there, but did not develop into an Iron Age culture. Instead, a second wave of immigrants brought the much superior Iron Age culture from the mainland.

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[4] Holtom, D. C., *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[5] A barrow is a simple mound of earth over the remains. A dolmen is a stone chamber or series of chambers with stone walls and megaliths for roofing. Sometimes the dolmen stands free, but sometimes also is covered with a mound of earth. In Japan some earth-covered dolmens extend over seventy or eighty acres.

[6] *Japan, Its History, Arts and Literature,* by F. Brinkley (London: J. B. Millet Co., 1901), Vol. I, p. 41.

Two migrations from Korea may be tentatively postulated. Ethnologists, however, do not consider either to have been of Koreans, but rather of displaced tribes who merely halted for a time in the Korean Peninsula. The border of north-central China is conjectured to have been the starting point of their migration, and they are supposed to have been racial cousins of the Tonguses of that region. Throughout Chinese history the emperors are seen to be preoccupied with the problem of the border nomads who ceaselessly raided the settled and prosperous Chinese. Better emperors took the offensive and drove out the borderers. Probably the ancestors of the Japanese were tribes thus driven by Chinese pressure into the bottleneck of the Korean Peninsula, whence they easily crossed into the southern islands, especially Honshu and Kyushu. The theory does not flatter Japanese who believe their race origins divine, but ethnologically it is quite tenable.

Reminiscences of this twofold migration are not lacking in purely Japanese sources. Even in the official myth of the foundation of the state it is not hard to discern a bit of worth-while history through the apologetic smoke screen.

> Susano Wono Mikoto, after receiving punishment from all the kami (for insulting his sister the Sun-goddess), went down to Izumo and subdued that district. In co-operation with his son he planted trees such as the camphor, the cryptomeria and the cypress in various places. He also made boats and went back and forth frequently to the Korean Peninsula. He and his son determined such things as the laws of medicine and the methods of divination. — Then Amaterasu-Omikami (the all-powerful Sun-goddess) determined to place our nation under the government of the Imperial Family forever and sent messengers to Izumo to make known her intention. The rulers there (now her nephew and grand-nephew) thoroughly comprehended the great principles involved and immediately obeyed the command. They presented all the land which they administered and voluntarily retired to Kizuki. — Hereupon the Imperial Grandson, taking with him the three sacred treasures and followed by the deities of the five departments, descended upon Hyuga. Here they dwelt for three generations and ruled over the empire. Then Jimmu Tenno extended the imperial sway and carried out the first ceremony of accession to the throne.[7]

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[7] *Teacher's Manual for Primary Schools,* cited by Holtom, *op. cit.*, pp. 129, 130.

Furthermore, the conqueror just named, when he pushed northward beyond the Inland Sea, encountered in Honshu people akin to his own, whom he peacefully incorporated into his growing empire.

Though, since the time of the unification of rule in Japan, immigrants from China, Korea, and elsewhere have settled in the islands, they have not been sufficiently numerous greatly to affect the development of a definite racial type from the elements just sketched. The Ainus remain a dwindling and unabsorbed minority. Of the Japanese type of today the ethnologist A. H. Keane writes:

> In spite of these various ingredients the Japanese people may be regarded as fairly homogeneous. Apart from some tall and robust persons among the upper classes and athletes, acrobats and wrestlers, the general impression that the Japanese are a short, finely moulded race is fully borne out by the now regularly recorded military measurements of recruits, showing for height an average of 5 ft. 2½ in. to 5 ft. 4½ in., for chest 33 in., and disproportionately short legs. Other distinctive characters, all tending to stamp a certain individuality on the people, taken as a whole and irrespective of local peculiarities, are a flat forehead, great distance between the eyebrows, a very small nose with raised nostrils, no glabella, no perceptible nasal root; an active, wiry figure; the exposed skin less yellow than the Chinese and rather inclining to a light fawn, but the covered parts very light, some say even white; the eyes also less oblique, and all other characteristically Mongolian features generally softened, except the black lank hair, which in transverse section is perhaps even rounder than that of most other Mongol peoples.[8]

[8] Keane, A. H., *op. cit.*, pp. 295, 296.

12. The Way of the Gods

SHINTO means "The Way of the Gods." Without for the present defining the term as a religion or as a secular culture, it may be said that Shinto has pervaded Japanese history and life as thoroughly as Christianity has pervaded the history and life of the west. The immigrants from the mainland brought Shinto as an essential part of their culture. Their rise to dominance in the islands effected identification of Shinto with patriotism. The organizers of empire found implied in Shinto the theory of a divine emperor and a divine race and made political capital of it. Buddhism and Confucianism, systems intrinsically superior to Shintoism, were unable to eclipse it as Japan's national faith. The ethos of modern Japan may seem superficially to be a surrender to the material progress of the occident, but is in fact an intensification of Shinto.

The meagerness of early historical information and the tendentious editing of what early sources there are make an understanding of primitive Shinto difficult. However, a tentative reconstruction must be essayed. The gods were many and not all of one class, for besides the great obvious forces of nature, preternatural influences which appeared striking or awesome were thought to dominate localities. Spirits were believed to animate natural objects which were useful or dangerous to man and the very artifacts which cleverly served his purposes. Manistic superstition added the ghosts of the departed to the already countless company of the kami. The latter term is vexatious both in its etymology and in its significance. It may be derived from the Ainu word *kamui* which is a generic word for spirit or it may be simply a specialized meaning of the Japanese word *kami,* signifying "above." The crisis precipitated during the past few decades by governmental insistence on universal participation in observances at Shinto shrines has occasioned controversial writing by Japanese and other savants on the question whether the word is really synonymous with "gods." The theoretic question has not been solved by these efforts at clarification, though instructions from Rome, to be noted later, have permitted a degree of conformity to governmental demands which settles for the present the problem of conscience for missioners and converts.

Practices of early Shinto were of the simplest. They were in general naïve expressions of a desire to keep on good terms with the host of the kami. The shrine stood in a fenced-in sacred precinct which was entered through a distinctively shaped gateway called the *torii.* The kami was supposed to dwell in the shrine, so the early Japanese fashioned his house after their own—a house of one story with sloping roof. Special features were protruding girders in back and front of the roof and the wooden piles which raised the whole house above the ground level, as if to protect it from swampy ground or inundation. Only under later Buddhist influence did images find their way into Shinto shrines, replacing the *shintai* of earlier times. The *shintai* or "god-body" (also called *mitama-shiro* or "spirit-substitute," and *kamusane* or "sacred kernel") was an object, generally of little intrinsic value, in which the kami was thought to reside. It would seem that superstition might set up almost any object as a *shintai.*

> Stones, sacred texts, old scrolls, ancient swords, phallic emblems, strips of consecrated paper cut in forms that possibly represent the sacred tree, locks of human hair, balls of crystal, jewels, pictures and numerous other like objects appear among the shintai.—It has sometimes happened in the past that when loyal subjects have been deified, objects intimately associated with their lives, such as head-gear, batons, weapons, writing implements and clothing have been made into shintai.[9]

Out of reverence for the fetish, the shintai was wrapped elaborately and concealed from devotees. They stood at a respectful distance and clapped hands to attract the kami's attention, bowed ceremoniously, and left their gifts on an offering table. What was of value in everyday life was presented—vegetables and fish, game killed in the hunt, even at times horses and farm implements. Prayers were voiced to the kami to secure protection and prosperity. A priest or priests had charge of the shrine, and with the passing of time and the social evolution of the nation came a development of ritual which differentiated the priests into distinct classes (for recitation of prayers, for purificatory rites, for divination, for sacred music and dances). Earlier priests, however, satisfied the urges of religion and superstition more informally, reciting prayer formulas of special efficacy, purifying from defilement by lustration with water and salt, reading omens from the markings which appeared on the shoulder blades of a slain deer after fire had been applied to them.

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[9] Holtom, *op. cit.,* p. 10.

Sacrifice affords the religious feeling of man a means of symbolizing his recognition of the dominion of the higher power whom he worships. There does not appear to have been any religion without some sacrificial rite. Early Shinto was no exception, though some authors do not agree here. Yet the oblation of food and other objects to the kami had a sacrificial intent. Oblations were made especially in the spring when anxiety was felt about the new planting and at harvest time when the duty of thanksgiving urged. The oblations were not consumed by fire or otherwise immolated, but this is not essential to the general notion of sacrifice. Though early Shinto was not committed to elaborate sacrifices, it expressed its reverence for the kami through manifold purifications. The "holy ones" might not be approached by persons or things that were defiled. Hence the worshiper removed physical, ceremonial, or ethical uncleanness by a plunge into the salt tide water at the mouth of a river. Or, if total immersion were not feasible, he might have himself aspersed with water, salt, or salt water. Other means were the washing of hands and mouth or the magical transfer of personal sin to a manikin of metal or paper which would then be thrown into running water or consumed by fire. Even to present an offering of salt at the shrine sufficed to cleanse from sin. At the planting and harvest festivals mentioned above the priest purified the whole people by waving a wand over them as he recited a ritual prayer. All these purification rites have survived into modern Shinto, as have similar rites for purifying objects used in the shrine services.

Sin was a very confused concept, for superstition had burdened conscience with manifold scruples and taboos. Says Holtom:

> Uncleanness might arise in many ways. It might come from contact with actual physical filth, or through sickness and pestilence visited on man as punishment from the gods or by the caprice of evil spirits or, again, through the contamination of natural calamities such as earthquake and fire, which again might be the expression of divine wrath or malign curse. Corpses, blood (wounds, killing of animals, menstruation, child-birth, etc.), leprosy, sores, boils, bunions, warts, sexual intercourse, incest, bestiality, the voiding of excrement, as well as overt acts of ordinary ethical significance, such as injury to the rice-fields and the destruction of animals belonging to another, all were sources of defilement and required ritualistic purification.[10]

The official history (cf. p. 79 above) says that the kami who descended upon the islands "determined such things as the laws of medicine and the methods of divination." The "laws of medicine" may be taken to mean a therapy consisting both of much magical lore and of the modest knowledge of *materia medica* possessed by a primitive people. The originators and proprietors of this healing art were, of course, no heaven-sent kami, but Asiatic shamans (medicine men) and their descendants who migrated from Korea into the Japanese islands. Great importance was attached to signs and oracles and to the whole pseudo science of divination, since through these means the kami were popularly believed to manifest their will or give counsel in human affairs. It was easy for the priest to simulate a divine voice issuing from the inner shrine of the revered shintai to which only he had access. When the faithful were troubled by strange dreams or by some untoward *lusus naturae* like a three-legged crow, he was the one who knew, by traditional lore or by special revelation, how to interpret what message the kami meant to communicate through these happenings. Divine guidance in such ordinary affairs as the making of a journey or the selection of a site for a new house was obtained by having the priest interpret the markings which appeared on a scorched bone (preferably the shoulder blade of a deer).

For the most part, the kami originated from superstitious, untutored imagination. They remained in the shadowy state of their origin, potent but imperfectly personalized bogeys, until mythology furnished a few of them with biographies and Buddhism identified a few with Buddhist "saints," personalizing them and representing them in iconic forms. Amaterasu Omikami in particular was one of the amorphous kami with whom mythology dealt kindly, shaping her into a mighty sun-goddess, suzerain over kami and men, progenitor of the imperial family. In early Shinto she was but one of the many *numina* (mysterious nature forces resident in and manifest through natural phenomena) that superstitious awe felt the urge to propitiate.

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[10] Holtom, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

Early Shinto thus rates a very low station among the world's religions. The kami are but sorry divine figures, having for attributes only a none too definite control over good and bad fortune, showing little interest in man's moral or immoral conduct, never evolving into clear-cut personal divinity but remaining in the embryonic stage of numina. There are no documents which tell what the ancient Japanese thought about his soul, but his practices attest a belief that some shadowy vestige of himself would survive the ordeal of death. It was a belief, however, too uncertain to exercise much influence on conduct, and anyway the kami did not possess attributes which connected them with sanctions in an afterlife. Certain actions, such as the destruction of another's property, were thought wrong, but the moral code was quite jejune, while the sense of guilt was so rudimentary as to be quieted by the same perfunctory purifications that removed physical or ceremonial uncleanness. Some primitive form of the mythology which was elaborated and systematized later (in the sixth century A.D.) seems to have served as philosophy and theology and to have afforded answers such as they were to questions on divine, human, and cosmic origins. There were no sacred writings. All this, together with what has been seen of the very primitive character of cult practices, reveals the extreme poverty of religious ideas and aspirations in Japan's native religion.

13. Buddhism's Challenge and Shinto's Reply

JIMMU TENNO'S conquests won for him and his successors sovereignty of the Japanese islands. Toward the progress and prosperity of the new empire, the existence of Shinto, the cultural ethos of the conquerors, had little to contribute. Primitive as it was, it could not serve religiously, ethically, or politically as a constitution for a state of any importance. The very principle of unity, belief in the divine descent of the emperor, was only in germ in the tenets of early Shinto, and in that poor soil was unlikely to develop into a potent element of conscious and proud nationalism. The union effected by Jimmu's conquest would in all probability have fallen apart, while such government as remained would have been exercised regionally by whatever chieftains seized power. Japan, in brief, sorely needed to go to school to learn discipline and wisdom from some nation of higher culture and proved governmental tradition.

Across the China Sea, during more than fifteen hundred years, one of the greater civilizations of antiquity had been evolving. Long settled in the fruitful valleys of the Yangtze and the Hoang Ho, the Chinese had been further blessed with centralized and orderly government by the Son of Heaven and his delegates. Their religious and moral heritage contained much that was correct and noble, and these racial traditions had been synthesized and codified by wise Confucius and the followers whom he indoctrinated with his patriotic ardor for the ideal of the Great State. The native cultural heritage had been enriched when the waves of the movement begun by Sakyamuni in India reached Chinese shores. It was chiefly the Mahayana form of Buddhism that China came to know and, though not lacking its share of absurdities and superstitions, the Mahayana ranks among the better natural religions for its doctrine of merit, its altruistic social gospel, the afterlife sanctions which it offers. Chinese civilization, besides these achievements in the fields of government and religion, had produced art and literature of genuine merit, an efficient system of commerce and communication.

At the time of the unification of Japan, China itself was passing through the long period of disunion which began with the collapse of the Han Dynasty (close of second century A.D.) and ended with the establishment of the Tang Dynasty (start of seventh century). The disunion put an end to the extraordinary advances of Han times without, however, hindering China's pedagogical work in the newborn island empire. From the third century onward the Confucianism of the mainland infiltrated the native Shinto culture and would no doubt have supplanted it wholly but for deep popular attachment to the older culture and its identification with the new Nipponese nationalism. For pictorial and statuary art, which were in a rudimentary stage in Japan, China supplied models and canons. Practically innocent of written language, Japan learned the alphabet and script of her neighbor, thus laying the foundation for later Nipponese literature. In agriculture and industry likewise the borrowings of the younger nation from the elder were extensive. All these elements of civilization are not improperly called Confucian, since it was the sage and his disciples who inspired China even in her material progress. At any rate, the Nipponese were quick to learn, exhibiting thus early in their national history the same extraordinary imitative faculty which since 1870 has enabled them to doff the trappings of medievalism and to don much of the externals of European and American civilization.

Jen (human-heartedness, altruistic regard for the common good) is the spiritual core of the Confucian ethical system. It does not appear that this cardinal teaching of the master registered with the Nipponese. It was rather the externals — order, ceremonial, politeness — that they took over from Confucian ethics. Though they adopted the five social relations — husband and wife, parent and child, elder brother and younger brother, master and man, ruler and subject — their practice of them was rather an observance of ritualistic rules and remained relatively sterile for want of a vivifying spiritual principle.[11] A certain hardness in Japanese nature, furthermore, tended to make two of these relations practically unilateral. A Japanese father could sell his child into slavery, could stop working and demand support from his children. A wife had really no rights but only duties in relation to her husband, had to endure without complaint or recourse her lord's mistreatment of her and his philandering.

In the interest of the newly founded imperial power the fifth relation also underwent a transformation. The Chinese theory (which Confucius adopted from agelong tradition and merely endorsed with his great authority) knew nothing of emperors descended from gods. Tien (Heaven) chose the founder of a dynasty, and so long as he and his descendants ruled China according to the laws of Tien the dynasty stood firm and the people were religiously obligated to obey. If an emperor proved remiss, Tien would speedily remove him by death, even elect a man of another family to found a new dynasty. Thus the term "Son of Heaven" implied no divine genealogy, but only the dignity of a divinely appointed king.

Now the tribal lore of the folk who had secured dominance in the Japanese islands attributed to the chieftain lineal descent from the divine sun. If we may trust the analogy of similar beliefs among Asiatic nomad tribes, the notion originated long before Japan's conquerors passed over from Korea. The statecraft, which in the years following the conquest welcomed Confucian culture, chose to endorse this crudely superstitious idea of sovereignty rather than the more rational Sino-Confucian theory. Probably back of this choice was the understandable desire to secure unity through subjection to an authority which did not admit of criticism. In an empire just coagulated from diverse tribal components it perhaps did not seem wise to encourage the notion that the imperial dynast might do wrong and be subject to deposition even by august Heaven. At any rate, steps were at once taken to generate an aura of divinity about the emperor's person. For the first time the mythical history of Japanese origins was written down, nor were the curators of the literary enterprise too scrupulous in the matter of retouching the old stories in the imperial interest. Accordingly the written *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*[12] make it quite clear that the very Japanese Islands, being procreated from the union of the great Kami Isanagi and Isanami, are themselves really kami. To rule them Amaterasu sends down her Grandson attended by a host of other kami, and from him Jimmu Tenno is the third in lineal descent. Less clearly detailed are the points of the origin of the Japanese people and of the relation of the emperor to other peoples of the world, but there is enough to found the later theory that the Japanese descend from the first entourage of kami, that the emperor is by right and destiny the ruler of all peoples.

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[11] From these five relations, taken as established by Heaven, Confucians deduced most of the rules which should regulate human conduct. To a degree strange to western minds these rules stressed external ceremonial observances, but by no means to the exclusion of interior virtues and sentiments.

In A.D. 552, says the *Nihongi*, the emperor Kimmei Tenno received from a Korean king a statue in gold and copper of Buddha, various Buddhist books, and a propagandist memorial extolling "this treasure of wonderful doctrine" which was embraced joyfully by folk in countless number from the Indian Ocean to the China Sea. There is evidence that strong Buddhist influences had penetrated Japan for several centuries before 552, so that the invitation of the Korean king was by no means the first awakening to Sakyamuni's claims. However, the *Nihongi* goes on to narrate how Kimmei, embarrassed, sought advice from the respective heads of the civil administration, the priesthood, and the military, finally decreeing on the counsel of the first named that Buddha might be worshiped. The priesthood (Shinto) and the military reacted by fomenting popular uprisings in the course of which the statue of Buddha was destroyed and his worshipers were manhandled. It was a passing phase, for Japan was definitely committed to a course of borrowing from the continent's superior culture—a culture which was Buddhist as well as Confucian.

The Buddhism which came to Japan was the Mahayana ("Great Way" or "Great Vehicle"). At its core were certain master ideas as certainly traceable to Sakyamuni's teaching as is the bleak nihilism which dominated the Hinayana ("Little Way" or "Little Vehicle"). Considerateness for all beings he had taught—a principle which was the basis of the Mahayana's ethical code in human relations and its taboos on the use of irrational creatures. (An observant Mahayanist will employ a fan, but never a fly swatter, against the annoyance of insects.) From the doctrine of merit there had evolved elaborate catalogues of good deeds and their respective credit points together with the comforting superstition of a vast treasury of merits accumulated by the "saints" (*Bodhisattvas*) and applicable through impetration to their mortal clients. The goal of final release (*nirvana*) which lured Sakyamuni was in Mahayana thought Amitabha's Western Paradise, a heaven abounding in all the delights that imagination could conjure up. Accepting India's ancient belief in metempsychosis, Buddha had taught that, until the soul attained perfect enlightenment, it would remain bound to "the wheel of life" and subject to the misery of being again reincarnated. According to the Mahayana, egregious demerits might determine one's next reincarnation in hell, where he would serve a term of fearful penalty before dying once more and being once more reincarnated on this upper earth. At long last, however, the Mahayana held out the promise of salvation for all in Amitabha's Paradise.

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[12] The former or *Chronicle of Ancient Events* narrates Japan's "history" down to A.D. 628, the latter or *Chronicles of Japan* adds some seventy years. The respective dates of their compilation are approximately 712 and 720.

Buddha's "metaphysics of self-annihilation" would have proved just another page in the voluminous history of Indian philosophy but for his establishment of the Samgha. This monastic Brotherhood, dwelling in community up and down India, wrote Buddhism's Scriptures, systematized its philosophy, taught the laity and ministered to them in liturgical functions and social service. Hammered at length by savage persecution, the monks abandoned their ravaged lauras and streamed by sea and land over India's borders, leaving the laity to lapse into ancient Hinduism or newer Islam. But they carried with them their books and their monastic traditions into the lands of their exile. There they set up new centers of Buddhist propaganda. No single cause accounts for their notable success abroad. They came from a land of high civilization and cheerfully gave themselves to the work of education both in the useful arts and in letters. Not athirst for martyrdom, they avoided clashing with prevalent religions and jealously dominant priesthoods. The Great Vehicle was commodious enough to take aboard any number of new deities and to seat them in blessed Buddhahood beside the divine worthies who had journeyed from the banks of the Ganges. Buddhism's progress across Asia to the China Sea is a record of such absorption not only of deities, but of religious and magical rites. Its doctrinal development seems to have been due not so much to borrowings from others as to the speculative penchant of the monks who wrote the *Sutras* in which bigger and better revelations were put into the mouth of Sakyamuni.

The decisive factor in overcoming initial Shinto opposition and in securing for the monks a Japanese beachhead was the patronage of Shokotu Taishi, prince-regent at first for a child empress and later emperor. His motives were not merely an appreciation which he shared with a large court circle of Buddhism's cultural superiority, but the zeal of a sincere convert. Educated by bonzes (Buddhist monks), he became so proficient in their lore as to write able commentaries on the sacred books. For all his bonze education and his fervor, he was patriot enough to revere indigenous Shinto and statesman enough to lean heavily on Confucianism for the reorganization of the state on Chinese models. The Way of the Kami, he said in one of his writings, explains Japan's origins and peculiar dignity; the Way of Confucius is the practical way for regulation of worldly relations; the Way of Buddha leads to a happy rebirth. This interesting trichotomy became standard theory among Japanese intellectuals, while in practice the influence of the three Ways upon the people has been great in the historical development of chauvinistic nationalism, of codes of ethics and politeness, of religious ceremonies and eschatological hope. The Meiji Reform of the past seventy years, with its slogan of "return to Old Shinto," has altered only superficially the composite Shinto-Confucian-Buddhist pattern of Japanese culture.[13]

Buddhism has a long memory of its benefactors, so that the name of Shokotu has been inscribed beside those of Asoka, Kanishka, and the Greek Menander. His title to the honor is twofold. He secured the new religion's beachhead on the islands, for at his death it counted, on the authority of the *Nihongi,* 46 temples, 816 monks, 569 nuns. Secondly, he pointed out with statesmanlike clairvoyance in the dictum just cited the important function which Buddhism was to perform in the total Japanese culture. Not immediately was the accommodation of the three ancient culture forms to be realized, for during several centuries Old Shinto through the efforts of ultra-nationalists resisted the intrusion of Confucianism and Buddhism. The writing of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* (cf. above) was inspired by this Shinto reaction, as was the written codification in 701 of the ceremonials and the festival days of the older religion. The dignity of the kami was preached up; at Ise and Nara two great shrines were built in their honor, while lesser shrines were everywhere multiplied and supported by state revenues. Despite the jealousy of the Shinto priests, Buddhism was not proscribed, so that the eighth and ninth centuries saw the introduction of most of the leading Buddhist sects. Their diversity of doctrine, however, sabotaged a united front, and it was not until the theory of the Double Aspect (*Ryobu*) was thought out that the monks effectively dominated religion in Japan. Of this the next chapter will treat.

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[13] An analogy is presented in the culture of China, which is an amalgam of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Taoism contributed some of its lush superstitions to the Japanese.

14. Buddhism Absorbs Shinto

DURING the thousand years of Buddhist history diverse interpretations of Sakyamuni's teaching had produced numerous sects. Of these about a dozen took root in Japanese soil, some to languish and die, other few to grow into vigorous social and religious forces.[14] Every one attracted for a time at least a coterie of patrons from among the higher classes, who were interested in the elaborate esoteric speculations into which Buddhist thought had run riot. For the people the monks had an exoteric doctrine of easy merit and assured salvation, a benign and puissant polytheism, a glamorous liturgy of public ceremonies, a code of magic adequate to the exquisite demands of superstition. Among the people, too, the monks carried on their traditional work of social service, acting as schoolmasters, physicians, promoters of agriculture and handicraft.

Useful as the monks were, they could not hope to raise Buddhism above the status of a foreign and minority religion until they contrived to crack the hard core of Old Shinto. Two sects may be said to share the credit for discovering the formula. The bonze Dengyo Daishi (767–822) was sent by the emperor to China where he studied Tendai Buddhism and on his return introduced that sect in Japan. Tendai's peculiar tenet is that Sakyamuni taught the doctrines of the various sects successively, that they are all therefore genuine and that Buddhists have no ground for quarreling among themselves. This principle helped much to draw Japanese Buddhists into a united front. Still another bonze, a contemporary of Dengyo, Kukai (774–875), crossed over to China and brought back the doctrine of the Shingon sect. Founding on Mount Koya in 816 one of Japan's most famous monasteries, he set about applying to Buddhist-Shinto relations the Shingon doctrine which Professor Anesaki describes as follows:

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[14] Cf. *Indian Philosophy,* by S. Radhakrishnan (London: Allen & Unwin, 1929), Chap. XI.

> The Buddhism advocated and propagated by Kukai was an all-embracing syncretism of a highly mystical nature. Its scheme extended the Buddhist communion to all kinds of existence, and therefore to all the pantheons of the different peoples with which Buddhism had come into contact. In embracing the deities and demons, saints and goblins, Hindu, Persian, Chinese and others, into the Buddhist pantheon, Shingon Buddhism interpreted them to be manifestations of one and the same Buddha.[15]

According to the Tendai, Sakyamuni was the chief manifestation of the Absolute Reality (Ichi-jitzu). Sakyamuni's work, as was seen in the preceding paragraph, was to teach the doctrines of the various Buddhist schools. Yet he was but one, though the chief, manifestation, for the pantheistic realism of Tendai would have Ichi-jitzu manifested endlessly in all the persons and events of time. In particular, and for the Japanese scene, the kami of Shinto worship were interpreted as rather special manifestations (*avatars,* to use the word current in old Indian religion to express the "incarnation" of a god). On Mount Hiyei near Kyoto the Tendai bonzes busied themselves with the reduction of theory to practice. They set up for worship images of the kami to whom the people were especially devoted, taught that they were simply Japanese avatars of divinities long revered in Buddhism, and surrounded them with all the glamor of Buddhist ritual. If we consider how rudimentary was the worship of Old Shinto, we can appreciate why the Japanese readily followed their kami into Buddhism's ornate temples and were pleased at their incorporation into a religion which had so manifold an appeal to religious sentiment.

A more potent influence in the assimilation of Shinto was the work of Kukai and his Shingon School (cf. above). He and they did more than adapt a spirit of all-embracing syncretism to Nipponese religion. They legitimized the Nipponese godlets and fitted their worship into a grandiose cosmic order. Shingon metaphysics, following an ancient Indian pattern, distinguished an order of reality from that order of unreality which ignorance mistakes for real. The one is ideal, immaterial, and eternally permanent; the other is material, impermanent, vanishing when the ignorance that fancied it is dispelled. Vairochana (the Absolute, the Cosmic

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[15] *History of Japanese Religion,* by Masaharu Anesaki (London: Kegan Paul, 1930), p. 125.

Buddha, the Great Illuminator) is at the center of the Diamond Cycle (as the real order is termed). Emanating from him and thought of as seated about him are four contemplative Buddhas, of whom Sakyamuni is one. Concentric with this inner circle of the four great Buddhas are other circles of Buddhas, who are archetypes (nearly in the Platonic sense) of all genera and species. The outermost circle, finally, is that which contains individual beings. All the circles emanate from Vairochana and all within them partake of his nature.

All reality is comprehended within this Diamond Cycle. Men commonly, however, do not arrive at an understanding of this truth, but live in a world of shadows engendered by their own ignorance. Spawn of ignorance are the visible world and its events, man and his gods. To this order of illusion Shingon gave the odd name of Womb-store Cycle. In practical religion Shingon divines tolerated the invincible ignorance of the herd, spoke of the Womb-store Cycle as a shadow of the Diamond, and sanctioned the worship of man's popular gods as an exoteric cult. The esoteric truth, however, stood firm and by the discipline of contemplation could be grasped.

Berths in one or other of the cycles were assigned to the kami. The little silly ones fitted into the Womb-store Cycle of popular ignorance. On the more illustrious members of the Nipponese pantheon the degree of Buddhahood was conferred, and they were billeted in the various circles of the Diamond Cycle. Amaterasu's primacy demanded special treatment, for Japanese devotion would not allow her to be subordinate even to Vairochana. With the latter accordingly she was identified in Shingon theology—an identification not so difficult, since his functions as Great Illuminator and hers as Sun-goddess were akin.

Ryobu ("double aspect" or "dual") was the name given to Shingon's metaphysics of a real and an unreal world. Hence Shinto, when interpreted according to Shingon principles, was called Ryobu Shinto. It was flattering, of course, to Shintoists to see their kami elevated to the peerage of Buddhism, but they did not foresee the consequences of this wedge driven into Japan's national faith, nor did they reckon with the dire perseverance of Buddhist propaganda.

This merger of the two pantheons fostered in the popular mind the concept that Buddhism was no alien and intruded religion, but an allotrope of the national cult. An allotrope, too, whose varied and colorful ceremonies did honor to the beloved kami and stirred religious sentiment to a degree unattainable by the jejune ritual practiced in the Shinto shrines. Attracted thus by externals, the people were gradually indoctrinated with the tenets of Buddhist faith. No sharp break with Shinto must be imagined. But the bonzes were more intelligent than the rather nondescript priests of Shinto and besides had a religion to sell of a definitely higher order. They tolerated the puerilities of the native cult as long as necessary, allowing the people's advancing culture either to dissolve them or to reinterpret them as patriotic or religious symbols. Too precious and too indispensable to the Japanese social order to be tampered with was the fiction of a divine race ever ruled by Amaterasu's lineal descendant. Hence, definitely as this fiction contradicted pure Buddhist doctrine, the bonzes assiduously fostered it and were even the authors of the theory that the emperor was divinely destined to extend his sway over all nations.[16] History has interestingly repeated itself in our twentieth century when Japanese Buddhism not merely fell in step with the government's Greater Asia policy but earnestly propagandized the theory that unwarranted aggression expressed the very ethos of Buddhism. Doubtless his Japanese children have caused pacifist Sakyamuni to toss unhappily in his nirvanic sleep.

With the exception just noted, the Ryobu creed was predominantly Buddhist. In general, that would be the creed of the Mahayana, already detailed, embracing considerateness for all creatures as sharers of the Buddha nature, an elaborate system of merits and demerits, metempsychosis, universalism of salvation. Pantheism, India's legacy to Buddhism, came to dominate Japanese thought, modified to fit the theory of a divine race. Early Shinto was perfectly innocent of pantheism, but after the intrusion of Buddhism Japanese thinkers, even the most original and the most desirous of restoring The Way of the Kami in its original purity, were unable to shake loose from the pantheistic presupposition.

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[16] Cf. *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy,* by R. O. Ballou (New York: Viking Press, 1945), pp. 129–132.

Holtom calls it "the philosophical bed-rock for which Shinto is chiefly indebted to Buddhism."[17]

The question of who would minister in the temples was answered by gradual compromise. As the two faiths merged, the distinction between Shinto priest and Buddhist bonze grew unimportant and an amalgamated priesthood (called *shaso*) served in the temples of the Ryobu. Even shrines which stubbornly insisted on their Shinto character yielded so much to Ryobu influence as to sanction an inner sanctuary where Buddhist rites were permitted. Conscious resistance to the process of absorption was carried on principally by certain families in which Shinto priesthood was hereditary. Such were the Urabe family which staffed the venerated temple at Nara and the Watarai family which enjoyed similar immemorial rights at Japan's holiest shrine, that of the Divine Ancestress Amaterasu at Ise. Chinese culture, Confucianist and Buddhist, had so thoroughly penetrated the country that a revival of crude and outdated Old Shinto was no longer practicable. Sole hope for success lay in a thoroughgoing reinterpretation of the *depositum* of the ancient faith, a reinterpretation which would elevate it from its status of a primitive superstition to a cultural level approximating the land's general progress.

Japan's innocence of an indigenous philosophy made it inevitable that all such reinterpretations lean heavily on the speculations imported by the bonzes. Patriotically the Urabes named their religious system Yui-itsu ("one and only") Shinto, to emphasize the claim that it was the national faith freed of foreign accretions; boldly, too, they asserted against Buddhism a counterclaim to universality. "All things, organic and inorganic, things sentient and nonsentient, things with spirit and without spirit: all are included in Shinto."[18] But in matter of fact the Kami or Transcendent Deity of the Yui-itsu is the Vairochana of Shingon Buddhism. Other borrowings are the frank pantheism of the Urabe system, the supposition of the two orders of reality and illusion, the avatars or "incarnations" of Kami, the admittance of all the Buddhas into the pantheon. These latter are, however, patriotically subordinated to Japan's own national gods. "By virtue of the intimacy and the accuracy of the revelation of the Absolute made through her kami and her people, Japan is pre-eminently the Land of the Gods, the Divine Country, and her emperor, descended directly from the Great Goddess Amaterasu-Omikami, is a god revealed in human form. The emperor rules not by the will of man and not merely by right of exalted virtue, but more than this, because of descent in an unbroken line from divine ancestors."[19]

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[17] *National Faith of Japan,* p. 195.

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 40, quotation from Miyaji's *Outline of Shinto History.*

Inevitably Amaterasu's chief holy place became a center of conservative loyalty to the old faith and of devoted effort to demonstrate its superiority over the Ryobu. The temple at Ise stood in Japanese religious thought as a kind of audience chamber where the Divine Ancestress received her imperial descendant's reports on high affairs of government. At his accession he journeyed solemnly to Ise to be acknowledged by her. Through imperial messengers he sent thither reports and gifts four times a year. Personally or through messenger he informed her of such national crises as the inception of a state of war and of events in the imperial household such as the birth of an heir to the throne. The shintai, or sacred object, enshrined there itself symbolized the close rapport between the goddess and her descendant, for it was the Yata Mirror which Amaterasu was said to have bestowed upon her grandson that in it he and his imperial line might behold herself and might keep it as the talisman of their royalty. Reacting against Ryobu propaganda, priests of the Watarai family, who ministered at Ise, extolled the excellence of Shinto not only as a national heritage but as an ecumenical religion. The speculations spun out to make this latter claim plausible were, however, little else than adaptations of the Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism with which Japan's cultural mother, China, had long indoctrinated her child. For Ise (Watarai) Shinto was rooted theologically in the pantheism of Shingon Buddhism with its Absolute manifested in a real and an unreal order. Special *kudos* is of course given to the kami of the shrine of Ise in that they are held to be the chief of these manifestations. The moral code so insisted on by the Watarai system is in essence not indigenously Japanese, but Confucian. To make the copy still more like the Chinese model, Ise Shinto incorporated much of the magic and divination of Taoism.

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

15. Shogun and Emperor

JIMMU'S unification of Japan was not a perfect work. His proclamation of imperial sway over the islands did not change the fact that wide regions were not conquered nor would be for centuries to come. Besides, the chiefs of the various clans who had co-operated with him in his wars, though they were content to allow him the imperial title, retained in practice sovereignty over their own clansmen. A governmental pattern soon emerged from these elements, a pattern akin to western feudalism. The throne needed the support of the clans, no less than the clans needed the symbol of the throne to encourage unity of counsels among themselves and to inspire themselves to complete the work of conquest of the islands. For the national enterprises of conquering the islands, as well as for the turning back of Kubilai Khan's Mongol invasions and for the Japanese invasions of Korea, the feudal system proved admirable. Yet the virtual independence of the chieftains of the great clans was an element of discord fruitful in long centuries of military and political strife. The pleasant fiction of modern official history that the emperor's will was always supreme contradicts historical records. Rather, his habitual role was that of a pawn, not of a king, in the fierce game played for empire control. It was convenient for the clan chieftain who happened to be predominant to use Amaterasu's reputed descendant as a mouthpiece for his decrees. If the latter proved tractable, he might expect ceremonial honors together with an opulent or shabby menage — the alternative depending on the generosity or niggardliness of his patron. Intractability brought upon the emperor forced abdication or worse. To be sure, this solicitude to keep the semblance of an emperor-centered government is a testimony to the people's faith in him as divinely descended and divinely appointed.

One early arrangement was to commit different governmental functions (civil administration, religious cult, the military establishment) to the heads of different clans. The *Nihongi* for 582 tells how Soga, the civil administrator, outmaneuvered Nakatomi and Mononobe, the two other functionaries, in the affair of allowing Buddha to be worshiped. Nakatomi and Mononobe soon revenged themselves by stirring up a persecution of the strange worship on occasion of a pestilence allegedly sent by the jealous kami. Umako, however, who headed the Sogas, let the storm of persecution blow quiet as it would while he direly pursued his more important goal of gaining effective control of the whole government. A new emperor, Yomei, was compliant to all of Umako's advice, repaired all the damage Buddhism had suffered and himself became a Buddhist in his last sickness. The succession was not settled except by civil war, but again the Soga-backed claimant to the throne won out and Umako's power increased. He now openly advanced Buddhist interests in every possible way, not because he was personally devout, but because he recognized the value of the foreign cult as a foil for the Shintoism fostered by the military and sacerdotal clans who were his political rivals. His ruthlessness may be judged by the murders he instigated of two unsatisfactory imperial princes and of the emperor Sujun who seemingly was not pliable to direction. In place of Sujun he elevated the princess Suiko to imperial dignity, but provided against the need for further imperial murders by committing the actual administration to a prince regent of whom he felt sure. This was the Shotoku Taishi whom Buddhist tradition holds in veneration.

Shotoku's policies advanced the Soga interest, though to what extent the fierce old clan leader dictated to the prince regent is rather a moot question. Every possible channel was opened to the influx of Chinese culture. Books and bonzes were drawn from the mainland by the magnet of state patronage, to lodge in the monasteries that Shotoku built. To the Chinese capital at Loyang embassies were dispatched, to be met at first with haughty rebuff but later to establish cordial relations. Japanese youths were sent to study the institutions and ways of the Chinese wonderland and returned to indoctrinate their imitative countrymen. Expanding commerce brought in the material products and *objets d'art* of a civilization already mature and just now entering on its most brilliant period. Through the channels opened by Shotoku Japan for three centuries was to be the beneficiary of the culture of the splendid Tang Dynasty (seventh to tenth centuries).

Shotoku's peace policy as well as his high patronage of Buddhism and Chinese culture were at least quite in line with Umako's own ideas, so the old chieftain had little need to interfere positively during the long regency. With Shotoku's death in 621, since no one was at hand to replace him, Umako took charge personally and for the remaining six years of his own life saw to it that Empress Suiko (his niece) proved duly subservient. For half a century he had virtually ruled Japan, setting the fashion for the shogunate, which until the Restoration of 1869 was to hold all the power while maintaining the fiction and symbol of an emperor of divine descent.

Umako's son and grandson overplayed their hands, capriciously setting up and pulling down emperors and empresses, overriding cavalierly the rights and sensibilities of the nobles. When it began to appear that the Soga chieftains were ambitioning the imperial dignity itself, opposition crystallized. Of the two great clans who a half century earlier clashed with Umako, the Mononobe or military clan had been practically liquidated, while the Nakatomi had retired from public life. At the beginning of the seventh century the chieftain of the latter was Kamatari and by hereditary right he was high priest of Shinto. With Buddhism in the ascendant, however, he chose to renounce the empty honor to devote his leisure to the Chinese classics and to watchful waiting for a turn in the political wheel. With the astute Umako dead and the less able Yemishi and Iraku violating all canons of decency in their arrogance, Kamatari struck. He disposed of the leaders of the Soga by the assassin's knife, forced Empress Kogyoku to abdicate in favor of Prince Kotoku, and himself took over the real power as shogun.

His studies in the Chinese classics as well as knowledge of the glories of the contemporary Tang dynasts had made him an ardent Sinophil, so he oriented his policy, as had the prince regent Shotoku, toward the adaptation of Chinese institutions to the Nipponese scene. The fierce controversies of Nakatomi against Soga about Shinto and Buddhism were by now water long since passed under the bridge, and, despite his hereditary high priesthood of Shinto, Kamatari frankly welcomed the foreign faith as a splendid vehicle of Chinese culture. In his work of adaptation to the Chinese, Confucius' doctrine of The Great State and its concrete expression in the China of the Tangs served as blueprint. Government and good order should pulsate outward from an unquestioned central authority to every part of the empire. As matters actually stood in Japan, he well realized, the central authority was revered only in theory, while government was administered by a bewildering roster of chieftains and lesser lords, each in his own independent duchy. Kamatari's first measure to secure a degree of unified control was to appoint for the various provinces governors responsible to himself (in theory of course to the emperor). Orders were issued for the chieftains and smaller lords to disarm their private armies. Many land titles, which had served as a basis for the independence of the lords, were canceled in favor of the crown, while on the lands of others taxes were levied as a practical acknowledgment of the emperor's overlordship. Against appalling geographical difficulties Kamatari struggled to build roads and other means of transport and communication which would bind the parts of the empire together.

In China the Confucian Utopia of The Great State was nearly actuated at several historical periods (e.g., during the heydays of the Han and Tang Dynasties). The country's geographical unity, the prestige of the Son of Heaven, a numerous educated and cultured caste capable of filling the ranks of officialdom, the people's love of "the good earth" and of simple avocations were among the factors favorable to the realization of ideal government. Kamatari had no magic wand to draw the scattered islands into the unity of a fine land mass, nor could his admiration for the Chinese transform his own culturally backward people into their image. His provincial governors did not succeed in taking over real power from the local lords, and Kamatari was too shrewd to apply such pressure as would precipitate civil war. He had to acquiesce for the most part in the *status quo* of clan government, while attaching the leaders to the crown by honorary titles and by fostering a brilliant court society. Decrees looking to the fattening of the imperial exchequer achieved only modest success, for the canceling of land titles in the emperor's favor was too often beyond the range of practical politics, while an elaborate scheme of taxation adapted from China's Tang system collapsed because of Japan's utterly different geographical and economic conditions, and because of the want of a capable and honest official caste.

From the brief civil war which followed Kamatari's death in 669 his son, Fujiwara Fubito, emerged victorious. He gave the name (Fujiwara) to the family which until the middle twelfth century would be the power behind the throne. Fubito materialized one of his father's dreams when in 710 he completed at Nara the new capital, to symbolize in its splendor and its Chinese inspiration Kamatari's policy of centralized authority and of adaptation to Chinese ways. Buddhism's ascendancy likewise found expression at Nara. It would be hard to trust what the native chronicles (the *Shoku Nihongi*) say of the magnificence of the Buddhist establishment there, did not archaeological examination of the material remains confirm the account.

> Work on the great hall which was to contain the image was commenced in 747. The construction and decoration of this edifice, together with a great number of subordinate buildings, all within one immense enclosure approached through splendid gates, continued for some decades. The whole was on a grand scale, without parallel in Japan for size and magnificence. The Great Hall in particular was of imposing dimensions, being 284 feet long, 166 feet wide and 152 feet high. . . . The great Buddha which it enshrined, though negligible as a work of art, represents in wealth and in labor a tremendous effort for the Japan of those days, and its construction was a technical feat of no mean order. The seated figure is 53 feet high, and contains over one million pounds of metal—copper, tin, and lead. It was built up to the shoulder in some forty separate segments, the mould being added to foot by foot as the segments cooled, and finally surmounted by the head and neck cast in a single shell some 12 feet high.[20]

Amaterasu had no such establishment nor image of her own, and the people might well have been scandalized at her descendant's extravagant devotion to Buddha. As a prophylaxis against the jealousy of the Imperial Ancestress and *admiratio populi,* the shogun employed naïve but, for the age, clever propaganda. A severe smallpox epidemic afforded a *casus urgens,* and it was given out that the great work had to be undertaken as an extraordinary means of propitiation. A venerated monk was dispatched to Ise to secure Amaterasu's opinion. He reported that the goddess had declared to him (in classical Chinese verse) that the emperor's project of honoring Buddha was as welcome to her as a ferryboat is to a traveler at the bank of a river. Shortly afterward it was broadcast that Amaterasu had appeared to her descendant in a dream, to inform him that the sun and Buddha were identified. With theological scruples thus quieted, the great statue and the vast Buddhist establishment of which it was the center were pushed to completion in the middle eighth century. With them was finished the new capital of Nara. Its construction had made bankrupt the imperial exchequer, and one would think that government would be long maintained at this beautifully planned and built city. Instead, in 785 the court packed up and moved to Nagaoka, abandoning Nara as casually as Amerindians were wont to abandon their village sites. The reason has never been found out, though possibly the shogun wished to remove the imperial person from the influence of Buddhist bonzes. The conjecture seems plausible in view of the extraordinary career of the monk Dokyo who had played Rasputin to Empress Shotoku's Czarina. Shortly after the arrival at Nagaoka the court in another unexplained remove transferred residence to Heian-kyo ("the capital of peace and tranquility"), modern Kyoto, where the seat of government was maintained until its transfer in the middle nineteenth century to Tokyo. From Nara as center Buddhism continued steadily the process of absorbing Shinto along the lines of the Ryobu already indicated. Nor did the removal of the capital mean that the Fujiwara shoguns ceased to promote Sino-Buddhist culture.

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[20] *Japan, A Short Cultural History,* by G. B. Sansom (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1943), p. 127.

Kyoto saw in the literary and other arts the first flowering which can be called indigenously Japanese. Chinese influence continued strong, but various causes contributed to a partial emancipation from the leading strings of the older culture. A cursive script was invented, far better adapted to the nature of the Japanese language than the Chinese characters hitherto used, so that literary composition in the vernacular became less of a Sisyphean task. It will be recalled that Fujiwara policy aimed at attaching powerful families to the crown through conferring of titles of nobility; hence gradually arose a court society at Kyoto. To versify and to fabricate romances were exercises which diverted nobles and ladies, who likewise extended their patronage to professionals in these graceful arts. Gracefulness is about the highest praise that western critics will bestow on the literature of the period, for the poems appear wanting in substance while the theme of the romances is mostly trivial episodes of Kyoto court life. The inadequacy of the literature (and the remark holds good not merely for the period under consideration) seems to be rooted in the inadequacy of the Japanese language itself as a medium of expression. The Japanese soul found the other media of architecture, painting, and sculpture congenial, and from Kyoto days onward expressed itself through them with originality, strength, and beauty.

Fujiwara power was never seriously challenged for three centuries. Emperors and empresses were docile to the policy shaped by the head of the dominant clan, and only occasionally was it necessary for the latter to force abdication in favor of a more tractable incumbent of the throne. Friction was kept at a minimum by the steadily increasing mixture of imperial and Fujiwara bloodlines and resultant identification of interests. Fujiwara Fubito himself was the father-in-law of two sovereigns and the grandfather of another. The theory of unbroken descent from Amaterasu's grandson would not permit the intrusion of a Fujiwara as emperor, nor perhaps did the clan ever desire this, but the Fujiwara ladies always stood at the head of the *turma* when an imperial heir-apparent sought a wife. By descent from the high-priestly family of the Nakatomi, by multiple alliance with the imperial line, by long and able tenure of the shogunate, by leadership of their fellow countrymen out of barbarism into civilization the Fujiwaras easily rank first among Japanese noble families.

From the days even of Jimmu the official theory of absolute monarchy had proved irreducible to practice. Not only had the emperors come under the thumb of the shoguns, but the latter had failed to unite the country under central authority. It is interesting to speculate on the outcome had the Fujiwara shoguns taken a strong stand in enforcing the authority of their provincial governors and in exacting imperial taxes. Pacifists and politicians as they were, they preferred diplomacy and conciliation to the risk of civil war, with the net result that the independent clan chieftains were never brought to book. The shoguns, besides, were driven by economic stress to another policy which augmented the centrifugal force already at work. Younger sons of the blood royal as well as those of Fujiwara blood so multiplied that it became impossible to supply them with sinecures in and about Kyoto. They were given office under government in remoter districts and endowed for their upkeep with tax-free manors. Where to the prestige and privilege they already enjoyed was added ability, these cadet branches grew into powerful families which expanded their landed estates enormously and enlarged their bands of *bravi* into formidable private armies.

From a son of Emperor Kwammu (782–809) thus domiciled in the eastern province of Hitachi sprang the Taira family which was destined to supplant the Fujiwaras in the shogunate. Subsequent emperors similarly provided for too numerous sons, and in time the group name of Minamoto was attached to the families these latter founded.[21] With the Fujiwaras already strong and the Tairas waxing, class interest drew the various segments of Minamoto into coalition. "The political history of the Heian period is in fact a tale of the ebb and flow in the fortunes of the great clans, the Fujiwara, the Taira and the Minamoto, and subsequent history is largely concerned with the doings of families which issued from those three houses."[22] The Fujiwaras, who never were military-minded, employed the prestige of the shogunate and diplomatic finesse as weapons, while their two rivals steadily built up military power. The shoguns, however, were driven by circumstances to help sow the Dragon's Teeth. For it was only on Minamoto or Taira that they could call for troops adequate to discipline the turbulence of smaller barons and of Buddhist abbots. Many of the last-named class, forsaking Sakyamuni's teaching of universal benevolence, hired mercenaries and trained their own bonzes for armed resistance to taxgatherers, for forays into neighboring baronial and monastic estates, and for frequent raids on the very imperial capital.

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[21] They were distinguished from one another by the names of the respective imperial ancestors, as Saga Minamotos, Uda Minamotos, Seiwa Minamotos, and others.

[22] Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

Until the second half of the eleventh century Fujiwara retained fair control. Then the situation rapidly deteriorated. Up and down Japan clan fought with clan, heedless of imperial decrees which poured from helpless Kyoto. Taira and Minamoto, abandoning their police duties, strengthened their arms and drew tighter the bonds of their respective alliances, sensing the imminence of a duel for supreme power. In 1156, taking occasion of a disputed imperial succession, they came to grips in a series of bloody battles protracted over a four-year period. Taira won out and, sweeping out from the court remains of Fujiwara, held the shogunate for a quarter century. Under Yorimito, however, who ranks as one of Japan's greatest generals, Minamoto again took the field and after a war of fearful ruthlessness broke the Taira power for all time.

The Fujiwara policy had aimed at modeling Japanese civilization on the Sino-Buddhist exemplar of the Tang Dynasty — a strong central government, a finely articulated civilian administration, emphasis on peace and the graceful arts of peace. The eleventh-century wars profoundly modified, though they did not destroy, Fujiwara achievement. It was the warrior now, not the sage, who was raised to the pedestal for national hero worship. Out of the long clan struggles had emerged the *samurai* caste with its code of reckless bravery and unquestioned loyalty to the chieftain, with its exaltation of the sword as a sacred symbol. Tales and scenes of battle replaced the gentler themes of Heian literature and art. When in the twelfth century Kubilai Khan demanded acknowledgment of his overlordship, he was defied, and twice his Mongol invaders were slaughtered on the Japanese beaches. Chauvinism has battened on the memory of this success against the mighty Kubilai, the patriotic Japanese recalling it with the same pride that the Briton recalls the repulse of the Armada.

Though there were no more foreign invasions, militarism persisted as the ideal. In the forefront stood a military dictator of Minamoto blood (for only during brief periods did scions of other families gain control). For the sake of the racial tradition of divine descent, emperors were conceded the trappings of royalty and repeated tirelessly in government decrees the old assertion of "supreme power for ages eternal," but they well understood that the matter of the decrees and the real sovereignty emanated from the shogun. Abdication and incarceration in a Buddhist monastery became normal means for disposing of less tractable emperors. Effective centralization of power in Kyoto varied considerably at different periods, as the shoguns proved more or less forceful and the *daimyos* more or less inclined to assert themselves. These latter, feudal lords descended from the old clan chieftains or from Fujiwara governors of provinces, had by prescription the right to maintain private armies which could be recruited at will from the rowdy and foot-loose samurai and whose expansion was limited only by the daimyo's exchequer. Pugnacious militarism grew through the centuries into a trait of Japanese character, as ineradicable as the older instinct of reverence for Amaterasu's descendant. Since 1870 the masterminds of the new Japan by astute propaganda have fanned these two national instincts into the flame of aggression which so nearly swept over the Far East. The flame has been quenched at incalculable cost, and the new Constitution (effective April, 1947) renounces war as a means of international policy and transfers power from the emperor and his circle to a popularly elected lower house of parliament. How well the new Constitution will work, we must leave to the omniscient columnists to predict.

16. Jodo, Nichiren, and Zen

UNDER the aegis first of Prince Shotoku and then of the Fujiwara shoguns the bonzes had woven a pattern of Chinese Buddhism into Nipponese culture. The civilization which the Fujiwaras gave the country almost lapsed into barbarism during the long wars of Taira and Minamoto, to emerge (when the latter family won through to a hegemony) weakened and profoundly altered. In particular, Buddhism had lost ground both from the ravaging of prosperous monastic establishments and from the loss of its position (nearly that of a state religion) under the Fujiwara shoguns. But enterprising bonzes were alert to the signs of the times and, even before the termination of the civil wars, had begun to adapt Sakyamuni's marvelously pliable doctrine to changes in the people's psychology and in the political situation. Briefly, the adaptation consisted in opening wide the door of spiritual salvation to folk oppressed by the manifold evils of the time (both Jodo and Nichiren) and in imparting to the Buddhist spirit a militant and patriotic tone (Nichiren). Contemporaneously with these two forms of Buddhism, whose appeal was to the masses, Zen Buddhism began to offer to the contemplative-minded an earthly nirvana in its retreat houses, where quietism and communion with nature were practiced. Nor did Shinto give up the fight, but reasserted its claim as the national religion through the earnest propaganda of its ancient priestly families.

Jodo, the Pure Land, is in legend the abode of Amida (Amitabha). His cult originated in the second century A.D. in Gandhara (northwest India), being based upon the *Book of the Paradise of Bliss*. This imaginative Mahayana scripture records the vow of the monk Dharmakara: "If after I have attained Buddhahood, all others attain it not as they hear my name and share my merit, may I myself never attain perfect enlightenment." He does attain Buddhahood as Amitabha or Buddha of Endless Light, and his generous vow is so far efficacious that the mere invocation of his name is an universal talisman of salvation. Salvation by faith alone without the works of the Law is the root idea of Amidism, nor is the appellation of Protestant Buddhism far wrong in describing the system. Says Sansom:

> Relying upon the strength of another (*tariki*), the believer who desires salvation has only to invoke the name of Amida Buddha in simple faith, and then he will be born again (*ojo*) in that Western Paradise, the Pure Land (*Jodo*), there to attain that enlightenment which by his own efforts (*jiriki*) he could not reach.[23]

The doctrine of salvation by faith alone is of course a hardy perennial in the garden of religious history. Nor are parallels wanting for venerated names used as talismans. There come to mind the "Allah il Allah" of the Moslems and the cries of "Ali, Ali" by which the Shiah sectaries of the same faith work themselves up to psychopathic frenzy.

The cult of Amitabha, fostered by a shadowy line of patriarchs in India and China, passed into Japanese monasteries as early as the seventh century. Soon Japanese bonzes of all sects, alone or in chorus with others, were practicing *nembutsu* (meditation on the Buddha), i.e., tireless repetition of the sacred name. Two bonzes are chiefly responsible for bringing Amida (the Japanese form of the name) out of the cloister and making him an object of popular devotion. Genshin's (942–1017) *Essentials of Salvation,* one of the earliest books printed in Japan, promised escape from the fearful Hell, and possession of the ravishing Heaven which he described to all who confidently invoked Amida. Genshin did not precisely disparage holy living, but emphasized unwavering confidence in Amida, who by his heroic vow had won salvation for all. It was a comforting thought, free of metaphysical subtleties, quieting to the solicitude one might feel on the score of one's own merits and demerits. Genshin's book was widely circulated, but still more widely did his simplified way of salvation become known by word of mouth. *Namu Amida Butsu* ("Homage to Amida Buddha") was on the lips of worshipers in all the temples, so that all the Buddhist sects were forced to find room for the Lord of Boundless Light and at least tolerate the people's boundless faith in him.

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[23] Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

The evangel of the grace of Amida fitted neatly into the prophecy of the Three Ages of Buddhism. For the first millennium after Sakyamuni's passing to nirvana (a date set uncritically as 949 B.C.) the Perfect Law was to prevail; for the subsequent millennium the Copied Law, since true faith would decline, yet piety would express itself in the founding of many temples and monuments; for the third millennium the Latter Law, when religion would degenerate and men sink into vice and strife. Who could not read the signs of the dawn of the "latter days" in the impoverished monastic establishments and in the lawlessness that stalked the land? Salvation by the hard way of personal effort seemed too much to ask of this harried generation, so the bonzes found it more opportune to preach up the easier way of confidence in the efficacy of Amida's all-saving vow.

It is illuminating to read this vow in its context in the *Sukhavativyuha* ("Description of the Pure Land"), a Sanskrit scripture revered by all Jodists. There it stands among forty-six vows uttered by Dharmakara, all phrased in the form: "O Bhagavat, if ——, then may I never obtain the highest perfect knowledge." The forty-six conditions which Dharmakara imagines are regarded as imperfections in the Buddhaland to which he aspires, e.g., "if there should be birth there," "or death," "if innumerable Buddhas do not proclaim Dharmakara's fame," "if the measure of his life there could be limited." If all or even one of these imperfections must be found in that happy land, the bliss of his Buddhahood would be frustrated and for Dharmakara all desire to journey thither would be ended. In this context stands the vow anent the saving efficacy of pronouncing his name. That is to say, he ambitions such talismanic efficacy as a means to the end of his own glorification. Doubtless, if viewed as an expression of the typical *arhat's* intransigent thirst for perfection, the vow (together with the other forty-five) finely illustrates the ethos of Buddhism. But the warmth of charity and of compassion cannot be read into it. The Jodist doctrine of Amida

(Dharmakara) the compassionate savior is no genuine dogmatic development from the seed found in the *Sukhavativyuha.*[24]

Since all beings are pantheistically one, taught Ryonin (1072–1132), a believer may, by pronouncing the nembutsu, secure salvation for all others. Through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Amidism deepened and widened its influence on popular religious psychology, so efficaciously indeed that confidence in the nembutsu has endured until our own day as a striking facet of the Japanese religious mind. This confidence is quite interdenominational, subsisting in each sect alongside that sect's proper tenets, frequently insouciant of obvious dogmatic incompatibility. The monk Genku (1133–1212), better known as Honen Shonin, and his younger contemporary Shinran (1173–1262) did organize the Amidist movement into a sect (Jodo or Pure Land Buddhism), whose central doctrine was the nembutsu and whose ecclesiastical form was congregational. Adherents joined up in such numbers that the bonzes of the older sects were roused to heresy-hunting and severe persecution.

Jodists insist that they are Buddhists just as earnestly as the most outré Protestant sectaries claim the Christian name. The claim to be Sakyamuni's progency has plausibility insofar as Jodist theology admits karma and its corollary, metempsychosis, teaches deliverance as the final goal. On the other hand, Sakyamuni himself has gone into total eclipse behind the figure of Amida: the mental and physical yoga of the Way has yielded to the doctrine that all "works" are futile: the Samgha has lost significance as an ascetical and contemplative elite and leaven, since the whole of salvation consists in "the mere repetition of the name of Buddha Amida without a doubt of his mercy, whereby one may be born into the Land of Perfect Bliss."[25]

Nichiren (1222–1282), though unimportant in the history of Buddhist thought, infused into the sect he founded so much of his own fierce militancy that it has remained the most aggressive of all Japanese sects. As religionist, he groaned over the corruption of the Latter Age and concluded, like the Amidists, that men were too blind and vicious to attain salvation by their own efforts. As patriot, he deplored the disunion and chaos of thirteenth-century feudalism and prophesied that final ruin would come in the wake of a foreign invasion. Though he had sat at the feet of Tendai and Shingon teachers, he began about his thirtieth year to revile them and all other sectaries with the unmeasured invective of a Martin Luther. They were severally brigands, liars, and traitors; were propagating a doctrine of fiends and devils and popularizing hellish practices. He memorialized the shogun at Kamakaru, inveighing against the sects as corrupters of the state and against the spinelessness of government in not suppressing them. Thrice exiled, and once escaping the executioner's sword only through a fearful storm which terrified his judges, he still grew in the messianic conviction that he was the "pillar and the eye of Japan." When the Mongol invasion, which he had prophesied, was imminent, the shogun reverently asked his advice. Intransigently Nichiren announced the country's doom unless his sect were forthwith established and all others put under interdict. It was too much to ask, so the shogun girded on his samurai sword and, uniting the feudal lords for the moment against the common peril, slaughtered Kubilai Khan's storied warriors on the Japanese beaches.

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[24] *Translations from the Buddhist Sects of Japan,* by E. Steinilber-Oberlin (George Allen & Unwin, 1938), p. 289 ff. — "Bhagavat" is the name given Vishnu-Krishna in the religion of Bhakti (wholehearted devotion), and in the context indicates Buddhism's readoption of Indian gods at first rejected. — Jacques Bacot in *Le Bouddha* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1947), p. 36 ff., precisely analyzes the utter difference in motive between Christian charity and the Buddhist virtue which goes by the name of charity.

[25] Words of Honen Shonin quoted by Sansom, *op. cit.,* p. 328.

Nichiren's patriotic argument against the sects was that they were sapping the vitality of the people; his theological argument, that the sects one and all were perverting the doctrine of Buddhism's founder. The final and all-sufficient revelation of Sakyamuni, according to him, was contained in the scripture called "The Lotus of the Good Law" (Sanskrit: *Saddharma Pandarika;* Japanese: *Myoho Renge Kyo*), which inculcates Pantheistic Realism, i.e., that all things are really one with the One Buddha. Nichiren imagined that he personally was the first to understand the sense and importance of this scripture, whereas in matter of fact he learned these things from his Tendai and Shingon masters with whom the doctrine of the Lotus is basic. Again, though he outdid himself in reviling the confidence of Amidists in the talismanic nembutsu, he borrowed oil from their lamps. He simply substituted another talisman whose repetition was the sole requisite for salvation. *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo* ("Adoration to the Lotus of the Good Law") is the formula he bequeathed to his followers, and travelers tell us that it is an eerie experience to hear Nichirenites at their great festivals fiercely chanting the formula to the accompaniment of drums and under the light of myriad colored lanterns. He left them, too, a diagram illustrating his pantheistic theology — in the center the name of the Lotus Scripture, grouped about it as emanations the names of all other things. Convinced that his was the one true religion, he planned a temple on the slopes of Mount Fuji from which the rays of the Lotus would be diffused over the whole world. The repulse of the Mongol invasion, however, damaged his reputation as a prophet and occasioned another exile, during which he died without being able to carry out his plan.

The third form of Buddhism which took deep roots during the troublous twelfth and thirteenth centuries sharply contrasts with both Amidism and Nichirenism. *Zen* (the word means "meditation") is ascriptural, quietistic, individualistic. Zen scholars are as familiar as others with Buddhist scriptures, but they regard them as of quite secondary importance (much as the Society of Friends regard the Old and New Testament books). The creeds, cosmic philosophies, and yogas which the books contain and which silly men have woven into various sectarian patterns, we are told, have nothing to do with essential religion. That can be only a subjective intuition, an interior enlightenment, a realization as individualistic to me as my own incommunicable personality. However, we would wholly misunderstand Zen were we to compare its "enlightenment" with Sakyamuni's "enlightenment." Buddhism's founder expressed what happened to him under the Bodh tree in the neat propositions of The Truths and The Way, while Zenists consistently assert that their experience of "enlightenment" is inexpressible. *Expertus potest credere*. Their attitude is a caricature of that of the mystics who profess inability to explain what they have perceived while the Holy Spirit took possession of their faculties. Closer parallels to Zen *satori* (enlightenment) are Anabaptist and Quaker experiences of "conversion" and "call."

Central feature of a Zen monastery is the meditation hall. Low platforms are built against the walls. Monastic stalls are formed by placing straw mats on the platforms and separating them by screens. The monks assemble in silence and seat themselves facing the wall in the Buddha posture – feet drawn up under the body with the soles turned up. Orientals quite widely court the mood of contemplation in this seemingly painful position. The leader, who may be the abbot, then proposes a "problem" – some brief, enigmatic saying which is supposed to be pregnant with hidden meaning. On this pabulum the monks fall to meditating, waiting for a flood of interior light to suffuse the "problem" (not to solve it in our logical western sense, but to engender *satori* or intuitive and extralogical savor of truth). An official armed with a rod patrols the room, ready on occasion to thwack the backs of sleepyheads. Outside of meditation hours the monks employ themselves in keeping the house and grounds shipshape, and turnabout serve on begging details which descend upon the countryside to solicit alms.

With a placid assurance rather maddening to westerners, Zenists refuse to define their tenets, reiterating that truth is inexpressible.[26] Again *expertus potest credere:* either you individually have the intuitive vision or you have it not; and that is that. This attitude may not be brusquely categorized as supercilious intellectual pose. Rather, reliance on intuition is part of Buddhism's heritage from its Indian origins.[27]

Why the turbulent thirteenth and subsequent centuries proved propitious to the notable spread of a "mystical" religion such as Zen is an anomaly. Possibly the comparative security of monasteries and the life of contemplation appealed to some as a way of escape from the anguish of the feudal wars. Secondly, the warrior class (samurai) and even shoguns fell under the influence of Zen bonzes. Though it is not of record that these men of war themselves became bonzes in great numbers, they seemed to prefer the individualistic and self-dependent religion of Zen to Amidist emotionalism; had a go at meditation during the lulls between wars; or, most importantly, endowed and protected Zen monasteries. Finally, throughout Japan's Dark Ages the Zen monasteries established a title to respect and gratitude by fostering learning and literature. The monks taught rudiments to the children of their district, indulged a traditional monkish penchant in copying old manuscripts, and brought to Japan something of the great Ming culture through translations from the Chinese and through imitative works. On the very spirit of literature and of the other arts Zen exerted a subtle influence. Japanese, it will be recalled, believed in kami or mysterious power manifested in striking, beautiful, and strange aspects of external nature. Molding and transforming this primitive superstition, Zen writers and teachers popularized the view that the one Reality (Buddha) is manifested in all natural phenomena—in Mount Fuji capped with winter's snow, in the opening of cherry blossoms, in the kaleidoscope of the butterfly's wing. Under Zen influence, poets and painters became adept in perceiving and expressing such manifestations of Buddha's beauty.

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[26] Steinilber-Oberlin, *op. cit.*, Chap. VIII, interestingly details his experiences when he sought elucidation of Zen tenets from Zen bonzes and other Japanese scholars.

[27] Intuition is the guide to truth in both Brahmanas and Vedanta. It is well to note that all Buddhist sects claim enlightenment by intuition, but Zen emphasizes this as the sole possible approach to truth.

Shinto's status during the feudal ages is curious. Its chief symbol, the divinely descended emperor, was in eclipse, reduced to poverty and shorn of all real power by shoguns and feudal barons. That the imperial line did not become a casualty of history is itself a testimonial to the strong hold that the legend of divine descent (of ruler and people) had on the Japanese. Nor did the rest of Shinto's *depositum fidei* pass into the limbo of dead religions. Apart from institutional organization, old beliefs and observances were kept alive in family cult. Institutionally Shinto flourished alongside of Buddhism in the many shrines where the principles of the Ryobu had been accepted. Pure Shinto ritual was practiced at the immemorially holy places of Ise and Idzumo, nor did the temples there ever lose the prestige of national shrines. Previously (p. 93 ff.) have been noticed the brave efforts of several ancient priestly families to formulate an intellectual apologetic for Shinto.

17. Merchant and Missionary

IN THE year (1542) in which Francis Xavier arrived in Goa, Portuguese mariners made two landfalls on Kyushu, southernmost of the Japanese Islands. A century of promise opened for Amaterasu's people. Portuguese, Dutch, and British merchants acquainted them with the marvels of Europe's material civilization, while Europe's faith, enkindled from the flame that was Xavier, spread with pentecostal rapidity. Though the people showed themselves highly receptive of these new influences, their leaders soon grew hostile toward the foreigner. The bonzes recognized in Catholicism not just another sect to be syncretized and assimilated by Buddhism, but a religion intransigent in its principles and demanding universal submission. Shoguns and daimyos began to fear conquest by the foreigners, who in the name of commerce were securing ever greater concessions and whose harquebuses, cannons, and galleons could easily overmatch the primitive armament of the samurai. Gradually pooling their grievances and resources, the secular and religious powers first ruthlessly persecuted Christians, then expelled foreigners and broke off trade relations. By 1641 Christians were a dwindling *gens lucifuga,* while of foreigners there remained only the Dutch staff of a small trading post at Deshima. For three centuries thereafter rigid isolationism was an unwavering national policy, not to be abandoned until Commodore Perry's diplomacy backed by a discreet parade of sea power pried open the door.

Information about Japan was eagerly sought by the Portuguese, for it was a new land opened to their adventurous spirit, commercial enterprise, and missionary zeal. Calculated to stimulate these sentiments were the accounts given by the early merchants, though it is obvious that they could not base their statements on very wide observation. They told of a land so fertile as to yield three crops a year. They spoke of the earthquakes and hurricanes, which in every age have scourged the islands. "The natives," says Jorge Alvarez, a contemporary of Xavier, "are for the most part of middling height, hardy, well made, and fair complexioned." He describes their attire and diet ("various kinds of grain with very little meat, fish, an universal beverage of arrack made from rice"), their use of chopsticks. Monogamy, he avers, was everywhere the rule. He speaks of the fortified castles of the "chiefs" and details from personal inspection the defense works about the "king's" residence. On the "king" he has the following interesting lines. "They are much attached to the person of their king, the highest nobles considering it an honor to have their sons employed about the court; every one is expected to enter the presence of royalty upon his hands and knees." In the minds of his Portuguese readers these words probably evoked the idea of a potent sovereign like their own King John, but it is unlikely that Alvarez had contacted anyone higher up than a feudal lord.

The prevalence of religiosity impressed him and, though he did not comprehend very clearly what it was all about, he observed closely the external practices. Idols were worshiped in the home, and there was a kind of holy water used to avert evil influences. In the temples stood more pretentious idols, some of which, he oddly remarks, resembled SS. Stephen, Lawrence, and other Christian statues. Bonzes chanted their "Office" in these temples and, when properly remunerated, prayed and chanted there all day long for the souls of deceased persons. Not acquainted with the vices practiced in the bonzeries (which Xavier later on was to reprove so roundly), he praises the good order, simplicity of life, and prayerfulness he observed in these establishments. Though he is silent about differences of doctrine, he notes various kinds of bonzes and bonzesses. "There are orders of black and gray friars; all practice community of goods. . . . These orders include women as well as men; the women live in houses apart and take vows of chastity." Shinto priests are probably meant by "another order of men who dress like the laity and carry arms: on their heads they wear square caps reminding one of the sail of a ship and a small cape reaching below the beard." "They wear their beards round their necks, by which mark they may be known." They practiced witchcraft — a note probably indicating the hoary magical art of Shintoism. They ministered at shrines erected in groves at some distance from human habitations, where on festival days they exposed "small idols, which are held in much veneration." Jorge Alvarez is very positive that this mysterious gentry "have no connection with the other sort of bonzes."[28]

Xavier's chief informant Han-Siro (the Anger of the Letters) was brought to the Saint at Malacca by the merchant Alvarez just mentioned. The young Japanese, having slain a man, had sought sanctuary in a Buddhist monastery. However, still fearing the dead man's relatives and seemingly also anxious about his salvation, he asked help of the Portuguese Alfonso Vaz. The merchant willingly got him aboard ship (Jorge Alvarez', as it chanced), promising at the same time that Xavier at Malacca would minister to his spiritual needs. A ready and sincere convert to Christianity, Han-Siro was placed by Francis (himself already planning a Japanese expedition) in the College at Goa to prepare for an apostolate in his native country. There, besides laboring at Japanese translations of prayers and catecheses, he gave his account of his people's manners and religion. This last is preserved in a long letter of a Goanese Jesuit to St. Ignatius. Reaching us through this medium, the account appears colored by the letter writer's theological brush, for he shared with many missionaries of the Age of Exploration the theory that in the religion of the newly discovered peoples there should be found survivals and analogies of God's revealed religion.

The emperor (*Voo* is the word Han-Siro used) had spiritual and temporal jurisdiction over all the islands ("much like the Pope," comments our Goanese Jesuit). He nevertheless delegated the entire care of temporals to the shogun (*Goxo* is Han-Siro's word). The governmental hierarchy was rounded out by fourteen "dukes and counts" who, like the shogun, were completely subject to the emperor and for cause might be deposed and beheaded. (All this must be understood *de jure* and not *de facto,* for in the middle sixteenth century the emperor was a figurehead, while the powerful feudal lords were fairly independent even of the shogun.) Han-Siro, professing ignorance of the sectarian tenets of the various kinds of bonzes, confined himself to describing their external practices. There were two orders of "black friars," one very learned, the other very austere; one order of "gray friars" quite unlearned and not addicted to austerity. Monastery customs are about the same as those narrated by Alvarez. "These religious lead a very virtuous life, except that they are stained by an abominable sin connected with the boys they have to teach in their monasteries, although they teach the people that this is a great sin and praise chastity." Of the gray friars we read: "They have religious houses for women like nuns. It is said that they have intercourse together, but that the birth of children is prevented by certain drugs."

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[28] Fr. H. J. Coleridge's translation of Alvarez' account is found in *Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier* (London: Burns & Oates, 1890), Vol. II, p. 216 ff.

Pure religion, we are told, had been brought to Japan by the disciples of a certain Xaqua. Born in a land called Chenguinquo to the west of China, he was the son of King Sanbon and Queen Illagabuni. His greatness was foretold to his parents in dreams, while preternatural prodigies illustrated his birth. Refusing to marry and overwhelmed by a sense of life's miseries, he chose at nineteen a life of solitude in the mountains. After six years he appeared as a preacher, "acquiring such unbounded influence that he remodeled the laws of his country and taught the people how to adore God." His disciples in turn converted Cathay (Tartary) and China, "preaching his laws and religion and making the people destroy their idols and pagodas; thence he came to Japan, making the people do the same; and even now fragments of ancient statues are found, as they are found at Rome." Xaqua's teaching comprised the doctrine of one God and Creator of all things; precepts of forgiveness of injuries and equanimity in adversity; prohibitions of murder, theft, and fornication. He is further said to have written many books on manners.[29]

This whole account is, beyond reasonable doubt, a legendary embellishment of the history of Sakyamuni and the propagation of Buddhism. The "books on manners" are likely Confucian writings wrongly credited. Han-Siro, who frankly disclaimed any intimate knowledge of Buddhist theology, was in error in his assertion anent monotheism, probably imagining that Amida's position among the Japanese corresponded to that of God among Christians.

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[29] Han-Siro's narrative, as edited by the Goanese Jesuit, is translated in Coleridge, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 208 ff.

To all their outposts of empire—Goa, Cape Comorin, Malacca, and the Mollucas—Xavier had followed the adventurous Portuguese. Plans for evangelizing Japan began to form in his mind as soon as the first reports of the new land and people were borne back along the trade routes. He matured these plans as he gradually became convinced that sinister influences were stymieing his work in the Portuguese settlements. King John's officials were giving grave scandal by their own dissolute lives; they did not co-operate in the task of convert-making; they either plundered the new Christians or left them defenseless against the persecution of their pagan countrymen. It would be better, thought Xavier, to let his now fairly numerous coadjutors hold the line in the settlements and to go himself to a field where prospects of conversions seemed unlimited. Anger's account and his own sanguine and apostolic temperament evoked in Xavier's mind a vision of a Japan where the Gospel could be preached untrammeled to a people naturally upright and singularly eager for religious truth. He had still to experience how tortuous-minded and fierce the bonzes would show themselves when their vested interests were imperiled by the preaching of Europe's faith.[30]

In accord with his invariable tactics on entering a new land, he planned to go at once to the capital and proclaim his mission to the ruler and his court with apostolic liberty. He was prevented from reaching Kyoto by storms and by the duplicity of the captain in whose ship he and his companions took passage. Instead he was put ashore (August 15, 1549) at Cagoxima on southernmost Kyushu. Save for a brief visit to Meaco—where he could accomplish little in the chaos of a civil war—he spent the whole of his two years in Japan on Kyushu, laying solidly the foundations of Christian communities in the southern island's three "kingdoms" of Satsouma, Firando, and Boungo.

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[30] The reports of the University of Chenguinquo, whence Japan had received culture and religion, interested him profoundly, for he knew from long residence at Paris the influence of universities on Europe. From his letters it appears that he was planning to lure European savants to the Far East to engage Buddhism's wise men on their home grounds at Chenguinquo. Probably the legend of the University of Chenguinquo derived from the days (long vanished before Xavier's time) when great Buddhist schools flourished at Nalanda and elsewhere in India. Cf. Kenneth Saunders' *Epochs in Buddhist History* (University of Chicago Press, 1924), Chap. IV.

In addition to consolidating his bridgehead, he made a reconnaissance of the entire Japanese field with an eye to future apostolic conquest. Of the common people he formed a high opinion. Coming from India and labor among folk enervated by climate, debased by caste and religious superstition, ground under the heel of an iniquitous economic system, Xavier deemed the Japanese by contrast singularly blessed. Seemingly not enslaved to their traditional beliefs, they appeared eager to discuss Christian doctrine and open to conviction: once converted, they were steadfast and fervent. On the state of morality one of his letters has the following: "They are sparing and frugal in eating, but not in drink. — They abhor dice and gaming as things highly disgraceful. They seldom swear, but when they do, they swear by the sun. They have not more than one wife. There is no kind of theft which they do not hate in a remarkable degree. The plague of unnatural lust is so common to all here, men and women alike, that the mere custom of it has taken away all their hatred and horror of the crime." The common people could often be brought to realize the turpitude of this vice and to forswear it, but the bonzes were so hardened that they merely jested obscenely when reprehended.[31]

These very bonzes Xavier soon recognized as the real core of opposition to the Christian mission. He found them in numbers wherever he traveled and understood that they were equally numerous through all the islands. Their hold on the people was multiple, for, besides being the accepted ministers of religion and venerated superstition, they controlled education and in fact constituted the only learned caste in the country. Their reputation, too, for austerity and virtue was great (though it did not take Xavier long to pierce through their hypocrisy and see their deadly pride and sensuality). Controversy was their favorite sport, for centuries of sectarian differences had formed Buddhism's monks into eager dialecticians. Hence, as soon as the missionaries had partially mastered the language, disputations became rife on the whole field of philosophy and religion. The bonzes proved no mean opponents even for men trained at Paris and Salamanca,

[31] Coleridge, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 237 f.

and in his later letters Xavier insisted on high intellectual endowments in aspirants to the Japanese mission. His sorrowful comment, "the more learned they are, the more grievously they err," was justified by their conduct when they were worsted in debate and by the small number of converts among the bonzes. In their rage they upbraided the people for forsaking their own gods and spread atrocious calumnies about the Christian preachers. At the disputation before the king of Bongo between Xavier and the famous Fucarandono a private army of some three thousand bonzes invested the palace. Though on this occasion the king stood firm and insisted on the amenities of debate, the rulers commonly were afraid to cross the influential and vindictive monks. The civil authorities were importuned with the same arguments that were urged against St. Paul in the Mediterranean of the first century: that the new faith attacked the people's gods and the good old way of living, that it would bring down the gods' punishment on the land, that it sought to undermine the state. Under this pressure the king of Satsouma decreed the death penalty against anyone who turned Christian, while the king of Firando persecuted the converts, though secretly only, because of his desire to maintain trade relations with the Portuguese.

Indian goods and the still more marvelous manufactured products of Europe found a lively market in Japanese ports, nor were the Portuguese less eager to barter, especially for the island's precious metals. The advantages of this trade, Xavier shrewdly surmised, were likely to outweigh in the rulers' minds the bonzes' earnest anti-European propaganda. He therefore urged King John, his viceroy at Goa, and the Goanese merchants to send more and more merchantmen to Japan's ports. He even drew up lists of commodities most in demand and suggested the interchange of special trade commissioners. Dreaming at first of formal diplomatic relations between King John and the emperor as a means for furthering Christianity, he soon observed that the emperor (and for that matter the shogun also) was but the shadow of a great name in the anarchy of the times. "The Japanese all have one king, but for one hundred and fifty years no one has obeyed him." He could not know the great changes which the second half of the sixteenth century would bring, since the trio (Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, Ieyasu) who were to restore central government were still in their teens. The utmost he could hope for was to win from individual feudal lords permission, expressed or tacit, to preach the Gospel in their domains. He expected the manly and Christian co-operation of the Portuguese merchants, but they, with notable exceptions such as Mendez Pinto, proved too much engrossed in their cargoes to be of much help.

The affairs of the Indian mission at last called the apostle back to Goa. Since for the moment the kings of Bongo and Firando were pledged to protect the Christians, he could absent himself with less anxiety. He planned to send a steadily increasing number of workers into the Japanese field and eventually to return thither himself to carry on the unfinished business. But first he would execute a bit of long-range strategy whose importance he had been weighing. To the west of the islands stretched the wonderful empire of the Mings, whose institutions and culture the Japanese regarded with awe. If Christianity were favorably received by the Chinese, its prestige in Japan would be mightily enhanced. He was never to revisit Japan and within the year was to die, with mission unaccomplished, at the portal of China. He left his dream of evangelical conquest of the two countries as a heritage to hosts of generous souls. It is by the light of the flame he lit, rather than by the material results he saw in his own lifetime, that his place in the history of Japanese religion must be judged. Within thirty years Japanese Christians numbered nearly three hundred thousand. When in 1587 shogun and bonzes turned persecutors, the converts on the Hill of Martyrs at Nagasaki and in the fiery pools of Mount Ungen, proved the sincerity and depth of their Catholic faith. Driven underground by fifty years of persecution and deprived of priests, the Christian communities for nearly three centuries baptized their children and passed on by tradition the doctrine and moral code that Xavier had brought, until in the 1850's they joyfully saw the Mass once more offered on their shores.

18. The Tokugawa Regime

NOBUNAGA, who in the latter half of the sixteenth century began the unification of Japan, started his career as just one of the feudal barons warring, like the rest, for advantage against his compeers. His ambition and ability effected a rapid extension of his domains and by 1568 made him the most potent lord in the land and virtually shogun. While he consolidated his gains, the campaigns of Hideyoshi forced still more feudatories to submit. The latter, a brilliant general though touched with megalomania, succeeding to the shogunate on his chief's death (1582), drew the feudatories closer to himself by magnificent entertainments and court ceremonies, and fostered nationalism by making war on China. Ieyasu followed Hideyoshi as shogun (1598), to complete the work of unification by crushing what opposition remained at the battle of Sekigahara and the siege of Osaka.

The Tokugawas (for such is the name given to the new line of shoguns) subscribed to the fiction that they ruled by commission of the emperor, maintaining propriety in ceremonial observances paid Amaterasu's descendant and supporting the imperial family in moderate comfort. Real government, however, was a military dictatorship. Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu, having won their primacy by the sword of the samurai, intended to keep the military caste in the ascendant. Their ideal of government was the discipline, loyalty, and subordination of an army. "The Bakufu, true to its name (literally "tent government"), was essentially a military dictatorship under which the military class was supreme and all other classes, whether farmer or artisan or merchant or laborer, were held to subserve its interests. This was their duty and their discipline."[32] To symbolize the break with the older ideal of civilian control, Ieyasu abandoned the old capital Kyoto and ruled from his military headquarters at Yedo. By deliberate policy the Yedo district was aggrandized until it grew into vast Tokyo. While by the same deliberate policy other great centers were neglected and denied privileges.

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[32] Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

The baronies, which after several centuries of virtual independence were now parts of the newly coagulated union, posed a nice problem. The family of the shoguns was of lower nobility than those of some of the daimyos, nor would the fiction of authority derived from imperial commission support the Tokugawas' position if their arm weakened. No daimyo could be allowed to grow overgreat, and confederacies hostile to the shogunate had to be discouraged. To these ends, heavy levies for governmental expenses, especially for the upbuilding of Yedo, were laid upon the daimyos. Their good conduct was insured by retaining members of their families as the shogun's guests. Strict limitations were placed on the building and repair of feudal castles. Trusted allies who had helped the Tokugawas in their rise to power were assigned lands at points which in the event of a rebellion would be of strategic importance. In brief, in preference to fostering a genuine national elan, they chose a policy of repression.

Suspect were all forces capable of shaking the fixed mold of union and causing it to unjell. The samurai were the pet caste, but might, if allowed to hire out at will to ambitious nobles, be organized into revolutionary armies: so they were forbidden to leave the service of their traditional feudal chiefs. Furthermore, no samurai might abandon the profession of arms to seek his fortune as farmer or merchant. Like fixity of caste was universally enjoined. Sons of merchants must stick to their wares; of farmers to their ancestral fields; of peasants to the backbreaking toil their fathers knew. Most curious of the edicts issued to implement this policy of caste fossilization was Taiko's Sword Hunt. In 1587 Hideyoshi (the Taiko Sama of the Christian annals) ordered all farmers and agricultural peasants to hand in their swords and other weapons. They would be used, he piously assured them, for melting down and conversion into nails and bolts for the new hall of the Great Buddha at Kyoto. Thus, he goes on, they would relieve themselves from such dangerous instruments and by consecrating them to so holy a purpose secure happiness in this world and the next.

Policies pursued toward religion stemmed from this same anxiety about potential dangers to state equilibrium. In wars of sect against sect, and against feudal barons, the Buddhist monks had long since grown as adept in using the material sword as that of the spirit. They had annoyed Nobunaga no end as he rose to power by conspiring with his enemies and he had a rod in steep for them. In 1571, on capturing Kyoto and finding himself virtually shogun,[33] he took strong measures. Dispatching expeditions to deal with more remote monasteries, he personally liquidated the monastic establishment of Hieizan near Kyoto, burning its three thousand buildings and slaying almost all the inmates. For the rest of his career he showed such unbending hostility toward Buddhists of all sects (except the pacifist Zen) that at his death the militant monks were ready to call quits and accept in the Tokugawa order the role which future shoguns would assign them. This role, as will be seen, was that of a police force for the extirpation of Christianity.

Xavier, on going to Kyoto in 1551, had been prevented by the civil war from contacting either emperor or shogun. His hope of winning tolerance for Christianity from the highest authority was realized to a degree by later Jesuits, who came to Kyoto in 1559, and who in 1568 were favorably received by Nobunaga. He showed no inclination to embrace Christianity, did not even issue any formal decree of toleration. But, besides desiring to promote trade with the Portuguese, he found the conversation of the cultured *Paderen* stimulating and instructive. They had ready access to his palace, while as a frequent visitor at their school in Kyoto he showed them an unrestrained affability which, as an autocrat, he did not choose to show toward his nobles, much less toward the bonzes whom he heartily distrusted. The gain to the missions was considerable, for daimyos and bonzes, knowing Nobunaga's attitude, prudently abstained from molesting missionaries and converts.

Hideyoshi continued his predecessor's policy for five years, but in 1587 decreed the banishment of all missionaries from Japan. No wholly satisfactory explanation of this startling move is offered — not religious fanaticism, for he held no brief for Shintoism or Buddhism; not fear of foreign encroachment, for the same decree states his desire that trade with the Portuguese be promoted. It could be that Hideyoshi did not like the rather numerous conversions among the barons, fearing groundlessly that their new faith might bind them into a party in opposition to his autocratic rule. For ten years he was content to allow the decree to stand as a mere threat. Then, seemingly inflamed by Spanish and Dutch slanders of the missionaries' political purposes, he enforced it for a time with complete ruthlessness. Missionaries were hunted down and put to death together with their devoted converts who had afforded them shelter. Heroic constancy in torment and death proved how sincere had been the conversions effected by Xavier and his fellow workers—a point to be noted, since it is usual for writers to talk loosely of the Japanese lightly turning Christian because their feudal lords so ordered or because of their desire for novelty.

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[33] Yoshiaki remained nominally shogun until his death in 1597.

The trial, though rigorous, was relatively brief, for at Hideyoshi's death in 1598 the inquisition lapsed. With the prestige of the shogunate damaged by Hideyoshi's mad and futile invasion of Korea, with a war for the succession on his hands, Ieyasu avoided antagonizing the Christian party among the nobles by ruthlessness. He was heir, though, to Hideyoshi's fear of a revolutionary junta of Japanese Christians backed by and in the interest of European powers. Portugal had indeed fallen under Spanish domination, but Spain itself, since 1565 strongly established in the Philippines, seemed to Ieyasu a greater threat than Portugal. Besides, Dutch and English traders, especially the clever William Adams, played for their own ends on his fear of Spanish aggression. The same sources supplied him with the stock slanders against Pope and Church which Protestant Reformers had fabricated. Thrice, then, by way of threat he reissued Hideyoshi's decree, and in 1612 began active persecution. Destruction of churches, confiscation of goods, banishment, unspeakable tortures, mass executions were henceforth for a quarter century the lot of Catholic Japanese, who bore all with a supernatural fortitude unsurpassed in the annals of Christian martyrdom.

Ieyasu died in 1616, but the work of extermination was carried on by his son, Hitetada (1616–1622), and grandson, Iemitsu (1622–1651). Under the latter two shoguns relations steadily worsened with Portuguese, Spaniards, English, and Dutch. Ever present was the specter of armadas which might be launched from the respective bases of Macao, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Formosa, nor in the light of the white man's record of Far Eastern imperialism can one blame the Japanese government for its suspicions. Government policy accordingly veered away from encouragement of international trade toward isolationism. Spaniards were ordered deported in 1624. Thirteen years later peasants at Shimabara in northern Kyushu rebelled. Economic oppression seems to have been the chief cause, but it so happened that a majority of the rebels were Christians. Iemitsu chose to read foreign intrigue into the record of the rebellion and followed its ruthless suppression by decrees expelling all foreigners (1639–1640). Japanese were forbidden to travel abroad and the very construction of seagoing boats was made illegal. The shoguns shut the door to the outside world, except for one tiny and carefully watched crack at Deshima, where the Dutch were permitted a small trading post.

The impress of West on East left by a century of contact soon faded out. With the uneasy autocracy of the shogunate furthermore discouraging influence from China, the whole result was that Japanese culture became introvert. The shoguns were not precisely obscurantists, but were bent on ruling "after the manner of a village headman." They patronized only those intellectual movements which would foster a population chauvinistic, submissive, and contented on their "tight little islands." The bonzes, ferociously beaten by Nobunaga, never recovered their spirit and contributed but slightly to the intellectual movements of the era. For the sake of a quiet life and the status of a quasi-established church, they meekly followed the government line. As long as was necessary, too, they acted as government agents in ferreting out foreign missionaries and native Christians. These were offered the alternatives of martyrdom or of apostasy and enrollment in one of the Buddhist sects.

It was Shinto scholars who furthered things of the mind during the Tokugawa era. In general terms, their activity may be said to have been twofold, ethical and historical. Ethical standards, sadly battered during the long civil wars, were reconstructed on the lines of the Confucian Five Relations (which have been explained in Chapter 5). The Tokugawas co-operated in popularizing the reconstruction since its whole tendency was to promote the disciplined group conduct which the shogunate desired. No less complacent was government with the scholars' historical labors. With the glories of old Japan as a theme, the scholars rewrote the mytho-historical accounts of Nipponese origins and development, re-edited the ancient literature, added commentaries, dictionaries, and grammars. As such ideas were adapted to popular capacity and made current through propaganda, chauvinistic nationalism was fostered. What the Tokugawas fatefully overlooked while encouraging the propaganda was that the dignity of the emperor as divinely commissioned ruler was being rehabilitated. The shoguns awoke too late, in the governmental crisis of the middle nineteenth century, to a realization that the people were fanatically devoted not to usurping shogunate but to the person of Amaterasu's descendant.[34]

The economic drift also tended toward wearing away the Tokugawa structure. For a time the prescribed order of subservience of all classes to the support of the idle samurai class was maintained, and the law observed of "sticking to one's caste from first to last" without seeking to better one's economic or social status. Naturally the yoke pressed heaviest upon the peasant, condemned to the rice fields and getting a bare subsistence from his toil. Gradually as many as could stole away to seek employment in such growing urban areas as Tokyo and Osaka. In the cities merchants, manufacturers, and artisans prospered and asserted their independence of the samurai yoke. Coinage of money, at first negligible, increased until it undermined an economy based on rice as the sole wealth. Rice brokers learned how to manipulate the market to their own enrichment and to the squeezing not only of the peasants, but of the samurai, whose tithes were fixed in terms of rice. The latter recklessly mortgaged their rice revenues to purchase the luxuries produced by manufacturers and artisans and sank hopelessly into debt. Supplanted in real importance by the wealthy middle class which had grown up in the cities, they brought pressure on the shoguns to put the upstarts in their proper place. But the day had passed when the shogun dared to act with the ruthlessness of a Nobunaga, so that the government confined itself to innocuous remonstrances, which the urban bourgeoisie cheerfully disregarded. They went their way of enrichment, enjoying a standard of living and pleasure envied by the penniless samurai, helping by their patronage a revival of the arts.

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[34] Mabuchi, Motowori, and Hirada, whose lives spanned the period 1697–1843, are the greatest names in the scholarly reintegration of the ideology of an emperor-centered state.

19. The Opened Door

IN THE second half of the nineteenth century Japan's walls of isolation fell and with them fell the regime which had built them. The Tokugawas had foredoomed themselves by refusal to recognize that a state constitution must evolve with the people for whom it is framed. Against the rigid walls of the isolationist constitution pressure grew intolerable from the need for cultural contacts and international exchange of ideas. The caste system which subjected all castes to the samurai became an anachronism when these idle warriors grew relatively unimportant during long centuries of peace and when a powerful middle class had arisen through industry in trade and the arts. Scholars, too, had flourished, and one of their discoveries was that the shogunate, root and branch, was an usurpation of power belonging to the emperor.

These dissident forces surged into action against the established order on the occasion of the visits of Commodore Perry's squadron in 1853 and the following year. Behind the diplomatic phrase of President Fillmore's letter to Emperor Komi was the determination to force the Japanese to cease from molestation and to accord at least some co-operation to the Yankee clippers which were plying trade in the Far East.[35] Still more persuasive than presidential words proved the modern guns of the *Mississippi* and the *Susquehanna* lying trimly at anchor in the entrance of Yedo bay. The Commodore, conducting negotiations with just the right mixture of firmness and reasonableness, secured in 1854 a treaty embodying the minimum "requests" of the President's letter together with some trade concessions.[36] Extraterritorial rights and an admirable mutual trade agreement soon followed, thanks to the diplomatic finesse of Townsend Harris, first American consul general. Within a few years similar treaties and agreements were concluded between Japan and the major European powers.

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[35] Grievances had multiplied. In 1837 the *U.S.S. Morrison* had been fired on at Yedo while attempting to repatriate some Japanese sailors. The crews of several whalers, wrecked on Japanese islands, had been maltreated and imprisoned until released through the good offices of the Dutch. In 1848 the brig *Preble* had to threaten to bombard Nagasaki before securing the release of fifteen sailors imprisoned there. The minimum concessions requested by President Fillmore were the safety of shipwrecked American crews and the opening of Japanese ports to whalers and merchantmen for coaling, provisioning, and refitting.

Though the emperor confirmed the treaties and agreements, it was the shogun (Iesada 1853–1858, Iemochi 1858–1866) who had to shoulder the political responsibility for "opening the door." Whatever his enemies really thought of the policy (and opinion was sharply divided), they represented it as a betrayal and an insult to the majesty of the emperor. That theoretically great man (Komei at the time), pleasantly surprised to find himself at the head of a faction too lusty to be disciplined by the Bakufu (the military dictatorship of the shogun), headily ordered the expulsion of the foreigners. While the shogun temporized, western feudatories obeyed the order by attacking foreigners and firing on American and European ships. In retaliation Kagoshima and Shimonoseki were bombarded, but the situation was not resolved until an allied fleet anchored off Hiogo (Kobe) and demanded a showdown from Emperor Komei. Terrified, he accepted the allies' terms, but, to save face, cast the odium of the humiliation at the shogun's doorstep. National sentiment was now strongly against the shogunate and, after a brief struggle to save his office, the last of the Tokugawas resigned his powers into the hands of Amaterasu's descendant (October 14, 1867).

Isolationism was interred with the last of the shoguns. Would Nippon, however, now take a hand in the lively game of international trade? Would she engraft on her own medieval culture the processes and products of nineteenth-century science? Would she fall a victim, like some eastern peoples, to the foreigners' exploitation to the detriment of her independence? The answers to these questions lay implicit in traits of the national character—intellectual curiosity, laboriousness, pride of race. The explicit answers were given as state policy was shaped by the group of young samurai (Yamagata, Inouye, Ito, and others) who advised the youthful emperor Mutsuhito. Genuinely patriotic, they saw admission of the foreigner and adjustment to his materially superior civilization not as surrender, but as national progress and a safeguard against exploitation.

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[36] *Perry's Narrative,* compiled by T. L. Hawks (New York: Appleton & Co., 1857), Chap. XX.

They planned and within a quarter century established a centralized government. To clear the ground, the old feudalism was swept away by two remarkable reforms. Between 1869 and 1871 the daimyos surrendered their independent fiefs to the emperor on the guarantee of receiving pensions amounting to a tenth of former revenues. About the same time the numerous private armies of the feudal lords were replaced by a national army recruited by universal conscription. Although the chiefs of the army (and a bit later those of the rapidly growing navy) exercised considerable influence, the old military dictatorship gave way to civil administration emanating from Tokyo and deriving sanction for its enactments from the emperor. With wonderful imitativeness, the Japanese, under government urging and the tutelage of foreign experts, learned the industrial uses of steam and electricity. Further to bring the country into step with modern nations, there were reforms in the law codes and in the currency.

The will of the divinely commissioned emperor was given out as the sanction for these far-reaching reforms. It is futile to try to determine how much he personally inspired and how much originated with his advisers to be carried out under his signature, the important fact being that the people complied with whatever was proposed to them as his will. Japanese faith in the divine commission of Amaterasu to her descendant had remained so strong that even the most ambitious shoguns maintained the fiction that they ruled by delegation from him. The same faith cheerfully honored the Imperial Decrees which guided the successive steps in the path of the new order.

> In that hour of greatest danger the national instinct turned back at once to the moral experience upon which it could rely, the experience embodied in its ancient cult, the religion of unquestioning obedience. Relying on Shinto tradition, the people rallied about their ruler, descendant of the ancient gods, and awaited his will with unconquerable zeal of faith. By strict obedience to his commands the peril might be averted, never otherwise: this was the national conviction.[37]

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[37] *Japan: an Attempt at Interpretation,* by Lafcadio Hearn (London: Macmillan, 1904), p. 411.

No scandal arose to weaken the people's confidence, for Emperor Mutsuhito, submitting to his advisers during his minority, worked in perfect accord with them thereafter.

These Shinto loyalties, which had survived among the common people through centuries of shogunate and Buddhist ascendancy, had their remarkable counterpart in the ideology built up among the intellectuals and the upper classes by the tireless labors of the scholars. (Cf. the preceding chapter.) Practical politicians that they were, Yamagata, Ito, and their set did not share the scholars' enthusiasm for a return to the good old pre-shogunate days. That would have been an anachronism fatal to Japan's independence in an age of steam, electricity, and long-range guns. But the people's loyalty to Shinto and the scholarly revival of the national ethos proved invaluable assets in the statesmen's hands. For with but a little astute direction a people who believed themselves a chosen race guided by a divinely commissioned ruler could be disciplined to national unity. Accordingly, there was issued in the name of a fifteen-year-old boy the Imperial Rescript of March 21, 1868, in which he is made to assert: "We ourselves exercise supreme and sole decision in both civil and military matters," and to swear that he will "satisfy the departed spirits of Our Ancestors and of the late Emperor." In his Imperial Rescript on the completion of the reorganization of army and navy he attributes the unification of Japan to the "abiding influence of Our Ancestors' benevolence toward the people" and declares that while "We may entrust subordinate commands to Our subjects, yet the ultimate authority We Ourself shall hold and never delegate to any subject."

A constitution seems anomalous in a governmental setup so absolutist. Yet the statesmen, especially Prince Ito, saw that in a modern state there must be some elements of popular representation and that the agencies of government must be finely articulated. While certain half measures, such as the establishment of local elective assemblies to regulate taxation, were put in force, Prince Ito set himself to a study of various European and American constitutions and in 1889 wrote a constitution for Japan. It resembled the constitution of imperial Germany more than any other, but differed importantly from all. The imperial prerogatives were reasserted emphatically, so that the way was left open for a self-willed emperor to set aside all constitutional provisions and to rule according to his own sweet will. To the people were guaranteed the rights which European and American constitutions insure, but the phrase "subject to the restrictions placed by law" made it possible for government to curtail these rights if it thought expedient. The legislative assembly or diet comprised a House of Peers and a House of Representatives, the latter elected by voters with proper property qualifications. The assembly's powers were carefully restricted, since the emperor could veto legislation or dissolve the diet and since neither he nor his ministers were responsible to that body in executive functions. Control of the national budget was shared by the diet and by the emperor and his ministers.

Prince Ito's description of the constitution as "a gift from the Throne" proved very apt, for in practice no serious opposition to Mutsuhito's will (formed, of course, by his ministers) was brooked. Among his councilors fine statesmen like Prince Ito, rich industrialists, military men — the last named "fire-eaters" — more and more prevailed and set the stage for the tragedy of the middle twentieth century. The modernized army and navy, unchecked in adventures in the islands in dispute with China, in Korea, in Chinese and Russian wars, evoked the dream of imperialistic expansion. To condition the people, the Shinto ideal of race superiority and destiny was earnestly propagandized. Shinto itself was accorded a preferential status, Buddhism being correspondingly demoted. Similarly, education was taken from the bonzes and put under government control. There began, chiefly through the schools, an amazing indoctrination in chauvinism which trained up a generation fanatically bent on securing "a place in the sun." But this phase in the life of the new Japan must be left for the following chapter.

20. Conquest and Aftermath

THE Meiji[38] government established in 1868 a Department of Shinto and appointed in every province *sankyogakari* (officials in charge of propaganda) to sell the idea of the unity of Shinto and the state. Since the propaganda, besides its positive goal, aimed at rooting out Buddhist influences, the bonzes had a bad time of it. Some of them were secularized and bidden to turn to farming or other pursuits; their buildings were sometimes destroyed, often confiscated; their icons were smashed; their vast estates reverted in large measure to state possession. After four years of persecution, however, the government reversed its policy, realizing that Buddhism's roots were too deep in the country. Still aiming at union of church and state, Tokyo now ordered a fusion of Buddhism and Shinto and issued directives on what this united church was to teach the people. Shintoist and Buddhist clergy tried seriously to carry out the directives (which were an amalgam of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto), but, like so many similar reforms, the united church proved abortive, and the worried government was driven to another shift of policy—a policy which remained definitive until the cataclysm of 1945. It is tempting to call this policy "separation of church and state," "freedom of religion," but such terms are too facile to express the actuality.

In search of a policy, the statesmen thought they saw a great light in the reports of their newly fledged ambassadors in foreign lands and of commissioners sent abroad to study western ways. These observers were practically unanimous in testifying that close ties with any religious body were deleterious to the state.

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[38] *Meiji,* meaning "enlightened government," is also a name applied to Mutsuhito personally.

Accurate or not, these reports influenced Tokyo toward separation of government from religion. Separation in Japan, however, offered problems. Buddhists, it is true were not likely to oppose the policy, after their experience of the new nationalistic spirit and of the government's strong hand. Toleration would satisfy the bonzes. Nor were the extreme Shintoists strong enough to offer important resistance if official ties with Shinto were severed. Statecraft, nevertheless, counseled against such severance, for certain specifically Shinto beliefs were indispensable to the state which was in process of building. Foundation stones in the edifice were the tenets of a divinely commissioned emperor, of a people specifically chosen by the gods, of reverence to the emperor's and one's own ancestors.

A decree of 1882 initiated the final policy. It distinguished Shinto of the shrines (*jinga,* "god-houses") from Shinto of the churches (*kyokai*). By *jinga* were meant buildings which government took over or would erect as need required, and which were to be used for the performance of a national ritual. *Kyokai* were the religious edifices in which the various Shinto sects (of which there were about a dozen) held their services, taught their doctrines, and proselytized. *Jinga* and the attendant priests were to be supported by state funds and to be controlled by a Bureau of Shrines. This bureau prescribed rituals and ceremonies for the *jinga* priests, who were forbidden to engage in other religious activities such as preaching and proselytizing. The *kyokai* and their priests, on the other hand, had to support themselves, and the priests might preach and proselytize as they chose, though their activities were under the surveillance of the Department of Education. The difference, then, between State Shinto and Sect Shinto is that the former claims to perpetuate the essential and traditional beliefs and ceremonies of the Japanese race, while the latter stand committed, in addition, to the theological and ritualistic interpretations of various historical schools and founders. The situation is somewhat akin to that of a western government which would proclaim itself Christian, but neither Catholic nor Presbyterian nor Methodist.

To Sect Shinto, to Buddhism, to Christianity (as the last named gradually secured a foothold) was granted freedom of worship and propaganda, since this was the line pursued by western nations. The 1889 Constitution (Art. XXVIII) reads:

> Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.

Practice soon tended to annul this good theory. Meiji statesmen from the start aimed at the tightest national unity. After the Franco-Prussian War they fell under the spell of Bismarck and his Kulturkampf. Later they became admirers and emulators of Europe's totalitarian regimes. Restrictions on religious freedom were inevitable. The powerful Department of Education was a ready instrument of repressive policy. It had early laid lown meticulously the curriculum to be followed in state and state-accredited schools. It now quietly forbade religious instruction of any kind in schools of both categories. Denominational schools had the alternatives of secularizing their instruction or of relinquishing their status as state-accredited schools.

Consciences were still more harassed by the observances which were ordered at the shrines of State Shinto. Several times a year the Japanese were constrained to pay reverence at local shrines to the emperor, to his divine ancestors, to the ancestors of the race. Government specially insisted on these observances on the part of school children, whose teachers were compelled to lead them in a body to local shrines. Furthermore, schoolmasters were compelled to give instruction in "the sentiment of reverence." That the instruction might not be vague nor haphazard, the department prepared "history textbooks" which teach the fundamental Shinto myth — the descent of the imperial line from the sun-goddess, of the whole race from her or from the other kami, the consequent race superiority of the Japanese and their destiny to rule other races. No one, not even the country's finest scholars, might either in speech or writing cavil anent the absolute "historical" reliability of these bedtime stories.[39]

Most dramatic result of this indoctrination has been the Era of Expansion (1894–1944). Fatefully the heads of army and navy prevailed in the country's councils and led the people, marvelously united in devotion to emperor and nation, to conquests in Korea, China, and the South Pacific. Through the half-century freedom of religion was vexatiously hobbled, lest any mentality be fostered contrary to Shinto ideology. Teaching was still more closely spied on from the primary level to the universities. Shrine observances were exacted from all. Increasing pressure was put on all religious bodies to break financial and administrative ties with foreign parent churches, to replace foreign personnel with natives. Protestant sects were further pressured to unite under the name of "The Church of Jesus Christ in Japan."

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[39] Extracts from government textbooks are given above in Chapter 11. For other apposite documents the reader is referred to *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy,* by R. O. Ballou (New York: Viking, 1945), pp. 181–192.

The behavior of the various religious bodies under this harassment was interesting, illustrating in the main the historical attitude of each toward the perennial problem of church and state. Buddhists did not object to the shrine observances, for long since they had admitted the Shinto kami into the goodly company of the Buddhas. Buddhism also, true to its historical character of pliancy, became more nationalistic than Shinto itself; went all out in supporting the militarists' expansion policy, in which it professed to see a new manifestation of the spirit of Sakyamuni. Since no matter of doctrine was involved, both Catholic and Protestant churches complied, as far as was practicable, with the government's desires as to personnel and financial setup. After much soul-searching, a majority of Protestant sects, with some notable exceptions, were aggregated to The Church of Jesus Christ in Japan. For both Catholics and Protestants, finally, the order to perform certain acts of reverence at the shrines of State Shinto posed a case of conscience. Did these acts imply religious worship? If so, they were idolatrous. Or were they, as the government declared, merely patriotic expressions to emperor and country? Some Protestant bodies satisfied themselves that the observances were licit; others refused to perform them and bore for conscience' sake the odium of government. Catholic missionaries and scholars, divided on the question of the liceity of the rites, awaited Rome's verdict. The verdict came in 1936 in the form of an instruction to Japan's Apostolic Delegate from the Sacred Congregation De Propaganda Fide. To quote:

> There is question here of those acts which, although originating in non-Christian religious sources, are not intrinsically evil but of themselves indifferent; neither are they commanded as a profession of a religion but only as civil acts for the manifestation and encouragement of patriotism, with all intention removed of forcing

> either Catholics to signify adhesion to religions from which these rites have sprung. . . . The civil authorities and the common estimation of cultured persons attribute to the ceremonies held at the National Shrines (Jinga) a mere civil signification of patriotism; namely, a feeling of filial reverence toward the Imperial Family and to the heroes of the country. Therefore, since rites of this kind are endowed with a purely civil value, it is lawful for Catholics to join in them and act in accord with the other citizens after having made known their intentions, if this be necessary for the removal of any false interpretation of their acts.[40]

There is no need to remark how gratefully this sane and clear directive was received by missionaries and faithful at the very time when Japanese patriotism was being beaten to a white heat, when reluctance toward the shrine observances brought upon Catholics ostracism and governmental suspicion.

The war years brought out perfervid expressions of Shinto ideology. Confucius was said to have longed for "a continental revival of Imperial Japan," for China's "fundamental principles were developed and formed under the great spiritual leadership of Japan." Hence the rationale of "the Chinese incident." "The Greater East Asia War is virtually a second descent of the Grandchild, who perpetuates himself in the everlasting life of the Emperor." "If we were to trace the genealogy of each Japanese subject, we should find that he belongs to a family which centuries ago was either a direct or an indirect offshoot of the Imperial Family. . . . The Imperial Family and the people have a common ancestor in Amaterasu." "The Emperor is not to be worshiped exclusively by the Japanese, nor to be represented as Emperor of Japan alone. The Emperor governs Japan and is the Emperor of mankind the world over." He is "Incarnate Deity and occupies in Japanese faith the position of Jehovah in Judaism," and the loyalty of the people is "nothing other than the heat of faith which controlled the chosen Hebrew people." If nations like Britain and the United States show themselves un-co-operative, the emperor will deal with them as "a mother who chastises a naughty child."[41]

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[40] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis,* Vol. XXVIII, p. 406. Cf. in this connection the article of Gustav Voss on "Missionary Accommodation and Ancestral Rites in the Far East" in *Theological Studies,* Vol. 4, no. 4.

[41] The quotations are from a variety of documents cited in *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy,* by R. O. Ballou (New York: Viking, 1945), pp. 183–191.

All this water has passed over the dam. Hirohito has declared himself not divine. The shrine observances are abolished and official connection of Shinto with the state broken off. The Wise Men of Potsdam have sanctioned the continuance of the institution of the emperor, and only time can show whether they decreed wisely. Their hope was of course that the people's unshaken devotion to him would prove a solid foundation for rebuilding the shattered edifice that was Japan. Directives of the occupational commander would probably be followed if they were issued under the imperial aegis. When the country came to be left again on its own, the only principle of stability in government which the Japanese understand would be untouched. All this seemed better than to sweep away thirteen centuries of historical development to try the experiment of metamorphosing the Japanese overnight into good democrats.

One would need the prophet's mantle or the infallibility of a newspaper columnist to talk authoritatively of the Japan of the half century that is now opening. One may, however, note several fine resolutions taken by the nation toward sane reconstruction together with a modicum of achievement toward the same end. The Preamble of the new Constitution promulgated on November 3, 1946, reads:

> We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected representatives in the National Diet, determined that we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful co-operation with all nations and the blessings of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government, do proclaim the sovereignty of the people's will and do ordain this Constitution, founded upon the universal principle that government is a sacred trust the authority of which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people.

The constitution, quite after the model of the first ten amendments to our own constitution (Bill of Rights) guarantees the various freedoms. State Shinto and all it stood for had already been abolished by orders from the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to the Japanese Government (December 15, 1945), a document remarkable for its clear analysis of "the perversion of Shinto theory and beliefs into militaristic and ultra-nationalistic propaganda." To supplement these orders, Hirohito in his New Year's Day Rescript of the same year declared:

> The ties between Us and Our people have always stood upon mutual trust and affection. They do not depend upon mere legends and myths. They are not predicated upon the false conception that the emperor is divine and that the Japanese people are superior to other races and are fated to rule the world.

The historian charitably will abstain from too close a scrutiny of the declaration's implications in regard to the past and accept as sincere Hirohito's intentions for the future. Surely, his conduct since the surrender affords no reason to doubt that sincerity. On his part he has good reason to esteem the courtesy and understanding shown himself and his people by General MacArthur and the occupation officials. Definite progress has meantime been made toward returning government into the people's hands by breaking the power of the classes which for half a century had dictated government policy. These latter were not the true statesmen who were spiritual heirs of Prince Ito, but the militarists and the great industrialists,[42] whose vested interests in expansion brought on the disastrous war. Besides bringing a number of individuals to trial for personal guilt, the occupation authorities are methodically dismantling the structure of militarism, and by judicious confiscation and redistribution of national wealth are breaking the hold of the industrialists on Japan's economy.

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[42] Ambassador Joseph E. Grew has written a record of his *Ten Years in Japan,* which it is hard to overpraise. His firsthand observations of events in Tokyo from 1932 to 1942 and his keen insight into the forces at work during Japan's Greater Asia push are invaluable. A true friend of Japan, he gives full credit to the efforts of her wiser statesmen to counteract the fatal policy of the expansionists. The book is published by Simon and Schuster, New York, 1944.

INDIA

21. The Hindu's Heritage

HINDU culture is dominant in the great peninsula of India. It is substantially the culture of the Aryans who more than three thousand years ago parted from their kinsmen on the Iranian Plateau and migrated to the left bank of the Indus. By conquest and by assimilation of indigenous peoples the invaders gained control from the Indus to Cape Comorin. Political unity was not achieved, but the various independent *rajs* (kingdoms) shared a common heritage of racial culture and developed culturally on parallel lines. Sacred writings (*Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads*) set revered standards of religious belief and practice, of which the Brahminical priests were jealous guardians. Upon thoughts suggested in the sacred writings philosophers fastened, to spin out vast webs of speculation which were gratefully welcomed into the treasure house of Indian thought. Gautama and Vardhamana rose as religious prophets and reformers, but after their deaths the patient Hindu mind softened the asperity of their teaching and fused it with the Vedic tradition. In the social order the caste system, already in germ in the tribal organization of the invading Aryans, ramified prodigiously until it held the entire population in its strangling tendrils.

Over the civilization thus established there poured wave on wave of invasion. The rajas and their people proved singularly unwarlike, singularly blind to the need for putting aside petty jealousies in the interest of the national defense. Alexander the Great conquered the Punjab, where his viceroys maintained Greek sovereignty for a time. Later still other Greeks descended from

Bactria and ruled in Rajputana, while Scythians founded a kingdom which extended well down into central India. From about the year A.D. 100 to the year 1000 the land was free from the scourge of invasion. Then Mahmud of Ghazni with his Turkish horsemen conquered the Punjab and Rajputana for the glory of Allah and the Prophet. The empire he founded passed into the hands of still other Moslems when the Afghan Muhammed Ghori set up his throne in the very center of Hindu culture at Delhi. Afghan generals, sent on forays to central and southern India, set themselves up there as independent princes, thus entrenching Islam throughout the whole land of the Vedic Aryans.[1] With the incursion of the Moguls — Tatar converts to the religion of the Koran — at the start of the sixteenth century, Islamism was further strengthened. The empire organized by the Great Mogul Akbar and enduring for two hundred years foreshadowed in its administrative and religious policies the British rule. It was during the period of Mogul dominance that England secured her first Indian territory at Madras. In this same town of Madras there appeared in 1744 the opportunist Robert Clive, who was to take occasion of the decay of Mogul power to initiate an epoch of British aggrandizement. By the opening of the nineteenth century, conquest and diplomacy had made over the title to the land of the Hindu to new foreign masters.

Neither the English nor previous conquerors prevailed through superior numbers, as did the invading hordes which swept over Europe. The typical Indian conquest was rather a matter of a battle or two won by a purposeful leader of a small, well-disciplined force over the unwieldy levies of a hastily organized league of native rajas. After this ritual of resistance had been attended to, Hindu patriotism relapsed into quiescence and caused the stranger comparatively little annoyance as he proceeded to organize governmental forms for the territory he had taken over. The intruding race continued as a mere handful in comparison with the Hindu millions, but held the reins of government securely until forced to hand them over to new invaders. It would be, of course, an exaggeration to say that the hereditary rajas were shorn of all sovereignty. Their position was rather that of vassal princes of the foreign overlord. Occasionally a dynasty of rajas proved strong enough to hold out against the foreign dynasty. Thus Chandragupta, ruler of old Patna, even expelled the Greeks whom Alexander had left in charge of the Punjab. The rajas of Vijayanagar long prevented the Afghans from subduing southern India. In the west-central hills Mahratta princes maintained their independence against the Moguls, nor were their freebooting forays into central India stopped until Sir John Malcolm and Captain Staunton broke their power at the opening of the nineteenth century.

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[1] The Punjab extends from the Indus to its southernmost tributary, the Ravi; Rajputana or Hindustan from the Ravi to about the River Narbada; the Dekhan thence to a line running eastward from Goa; the peninsula from Goa to Cape Comorin.

Though the Hindus' material resistance to their conquerors was negligible, their spiritual resistance was uncompromising. Exposed successively to Hellenism, Islamism, and the civilization of Western Europe, Hinduism contracted culture traits from none of them. There still broods over the vast peninsula the conviction expressed by the ancient sage: the futility of human effort stands revealed in the light of the burning ghat. Life is transitory and full of misery, and its consummation is devoutly to be wished. Nor does the individual carry only his own load of woe, for he is a reincarnation of a previous being or beings who have handed on their own debts of suffering. To escape from this torture-wheel of life-death-rebirth the Hindu adopts not the militancy of meritorious action, but the passivity of suppression of all desire. From such pessimism, with which his race has been indoctrinated since the earliest teaching of the Brahmanas, he has not been shaken either by the lusty worldliness of Islam or by Christianity's doctrine of doing and enduring for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Though the Aryans, as they penetrated southward through the land, accepted a few of the aboriginal gods and superstitions, syncretism otherwise has been practically inoperative. What transformation the religion of the Vedas underwent — a transformation truly momentous — was effected by an autonomous growth of Hindu thought and practice. A nebulous monism oddly blended with the naturistic polytheism of the Vedas came to be the accepted concept of divinity. The concept has continued unaffected by the influence of Moslem and Christian monotheism. Both Afghan and Mogul were persecutors, the former delighting in smashing temples and idols while the latter laid a heavy poll tax on unbelievers to convince them of the divine commission of Mohammed. But the Hindu refashioned the hideous grotesques of his Vishnu and his Durga and rebuilt their temples. Nor would he trade his Veda for the Koran, even though mulcted of his rupees for his steadfastness. The complex religiosity of daily life – rooted in Veda and Brahmana and expanding through the centuries – with its myriad scruples and taboos and its purer elements of prayer and devotion is a perennial wonder to the non-Indian observer, but a fashion precious in Hindu eyes. The Hindu would no more change it for Moslem or Christian customs than would the Irishman of penal days have adopted the faith and manners of the intruded English Establishment.

What is true of psychology and religion, is emphatically true of the social order. The caste system was both an autonomous growth and a social order which proved intransigent to foreign influences. When the original Aryans entered India, they already recognized three classes in their own tribal organization – priest, warrior, landowner. To preserve the Aryan stock pure from the pollution of aboriginal blood, it was thought necessary to caseharden these distinctions, especially by prohibiting marriage outside of one's inherited class. For those aborigines who wished to fall in with Aryan ways an accommodation was made by acknowledging them as a servant class. For the rest of the aborigines there remained only the status of "untouchables," outcasts who might not hope to share in the Aryan heritage. Before any Macedonian, Scythian, Turk, or Christian descended upon the land, Hinduism had set fast in the caste mold. Endeavors, however earnest and thorough, to incorporate the native population into the social order of their foreign overlords proved bootless. A unified state naturally presupposes a sense of solidarity in its members, while it must afford them a measure of equality of opportunity together with substantial equality before the law. "The poor benighted Hindu, sticking to his caste from first to last," resisted any uplift to the plane of such democratic ideals. For him solidarity had no meaning except association with *chucklers* (leatherworkers), if haply he were born a chuckler, and total abstinence from dealings with *udaiyans* (potters) and people of all other castes. Where the individual is thus predestined from birth to the station he will hold, it is obvious that the door of opportunity is fairly closed even to the able and ambitious. Furthermore, it was all very well for the intruder to proclaim Islamic or British law as the law of the land, with a view to securing equable administration of justice. The castes had their own legal traditions, and each caste continued to judge and punish its members according to its own revered code.[2] Only sophomoric thinking can lead to the conclusion that all this has been changed by the establishment of independent India or by its "democratic" constitution. Never yet have statutes availed to alter ways of life which are rooted in a people's social consciousness and religious sentiment (cf. p. 156 below).

The census of 1931 set India's population at 350,529,557, of which number 252,238,440 professed Hinduism. Islam claimed 77,677,545. Tribal religions, which may be understood to be survivals of aboriginal cults, numbered 8,280,347 believers. There were 3,294,205 Catholics and 3,002,558 Protestants. To the Hindu total might justly be added the more than four million Sikhs, who worship the Vedic gods in practice and have relapsed into many Hindu ways and superstitions, though originally their sect professed monotheism and rejected the national caste system and ceremonialism. Buddhists and Jains were included in the Hindu total, since in religious and general culture they were true, though sectarian, Hindus. Dry population figures, then, support all that has been said of the persistence of the ancient culture through all historical vicissitudes.[3]

Pure Hinduism has spread but little beyond the borders of the land of its birth. The master ideas, however, of its religious philosophy have gone forth to affect profoundly the civilization and history of other peoples. Pantheism, metempsychosis, a pessimistic appraisal of earthly life are a few of these master ideas. The vehicle of their transmission to foreigners has been chiefly proselytizing Buddhism, while the geographical trend of the missionary zeal has been distinctly a push toward the east. Burma, Ceylon,

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[2] "Strict and universal observance of caste and caste usages forms practically their whole social law. A very great number of people are to be found among them to whom death would appear far more desirable than life, if, for example, the latter were to be sustained by eating cow's flesh or any food prepared by Pariahs or other outcastes" (*Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies,* by Abbé Dubois [Oxford U. Press, 1906], p. 41).

[3] Cf. *State Population Census By Faiths,* by H. S. Linfield (New York: Hasid Service, 1938), p. 62.

Siam, and Tibet are almost wholly dominated by a religious philosophy derived from Mother India. Among China's millions Buddhism ranks as a minority religion, but musters a great multitude of adherents, while in Japan it is the majority religion despite the vigorous revival of Shintoism.

A "lunatic fringe" of cultists has introduced a caricature of Indian philosophy and religion to the western world. The names of Henry Olcott, of Helen Blavatsky, Annie Besant, and poor duped Yedda Krishnamurti come to mind in connection with the vagaries of Theosophy, while in a North Shore suburb of Chicago stands a magnificent Bahai temple as a memorial to the truth of Barnum's statement anent the gullibility of the American public.

Professor Max Müller's translation of the Veda, the Abbé Dubois's account of Hindu life, and Professor Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy* are scholarly works of first importance for an inquiry into the Hindu's religious philosophy and psychology.

22. Periods of History and Periods of Thought

TWO Sanskrit epics tell of the early days of Indo-European occupation of India. They offer curious, though quite accidental, analogies to *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The *Mahabharata's* theme is a protracted war fought by incredibly puissant heroes, while the *Ramayana* narrates the wanderings of the exiled prince Rama and his final restoration to home and throne. The Indian bard takes Homeric delight in describing single combats between rival champions, in introducing the gods as actors in the human drama, in bringing gigantic monsters to confusion through the cleverness and valor of human heroes. The Indian Odysseus even has his Penelope in the sore-tried but faithful wife Sita.[4]

Fragments of authentic history which may be picked out of their epic setting of poetry and preternatural marvel are about the following. There had lived an illustrious Aryan chief who had conquered much of India, whose name was Bharata. His descendants were rajas of a kingdom in northwest Rajputana with its capital at Hastinapur on the upper Ganges. Other Aryan rajas ruled in the Punjab, while below Hastinapur the rajs of Oude and Kanouj had been established on the left and right banks of the Ganges respectively. The Aryans were thus gradually advancing southward from their point of entrance down the valleys of the Ganges and the Jumna. To the south and west of this chain of Aryan settlements the aborigines, known as Bhils and Rakshasas, still held their own, for the rajas were too busy with typically oriental court intrigues and too jealous of one another to engage in further expeditions of conquest. The *Mahabharata* (great war of the Bharata) deals with a fratricidal struggle for the throne of Hastinapur, in which the neighboring raj of Kanouj becomes involved. The *Ramayana* tells how the virtuous prince Rama is driven into exile among the Rakshasas because his stepmother the Rani wants the succession to the throne of Oude settled upon her own child.

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[4] Chronology is obscure, but the events of the *Mahabharata* are put tentatively in the fifteenth century B.C., those of the *Ramayana* in the eleventh.

The life of Sakyamuni the Buddha (probably late sixth and early fifth century B.C.) affords further glimpses of the progress of conquest and of the development of Hindu civilization. The descendants of the early Aryans had continued the push down the Ganges, occupied the whole country on its southern bank, and reached the sea. A major war was going on between two powerful rajas. Luxury and effeminacy had greatly increased in the royal courts, while the poverty and misery which we associate with Indian life had appeared among the common people. Benares was becoming a holy city. Brahmins enjoyed the credit of religious oracles, while the land teemed with mendicant ascetics.

Herodotus (middle fifth century B.C.) tells how Darius Hystaspis sent an expedition down the Indus to the ocean to report on this remote region to which the Persian king laid claim. "Of the Indians the population is by far the greatest of all nations whom we know of, and they paid (to Darius) a tribute proportionally greater than all the rest, three hundred and sixty talents of gold dust."[5] The Greek historian then goes on to tell of India's wealth in gold, in grain, fruit, and strange animals; of Padeans in the east who are cannibals, of marsh dwellers along the Indus who eat raw fish and clothe themselves in reeds, of others who eat no meat nor will kill any living thing, but eat wild herbs and grain; of a northern people who resemble the Bactrians (a branch of the Aryans) who are warlike. Much of his account deals obviously with the aborigines, though we may perhaps recognize the Indo-Aryans in the people last mentioned and in those who taboo flesh meat.

Alexander won the Punjab in a great battle on the banks of the Jhelum, a tributary of the Indus. Greek accounts of the Punjab at this period tell of its wealth, of its division into three independent rajs, of its inordinate reverence for Brahmins as holy ascetics, prophets, and philosophers. The Greek kingdom founded in the Punjab by Alexander soon fell before the attack of a Hindu prince named Chandra-Gupta who established his throne at Pali-Bothra

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[5] Herodotus, *History*, Bk. III, Chap. 94. Other references: III, 98–106; IV, 44.

(Patna) on the Ganges and mastered all of Hindustan and the Punjab. He entertained at his court an ambassador of the Greeks, Megasthenes by name, who wrote a valuable firsthand account of India. Though known to us only through excerpts in other writers, the work has saved from oblivion the following facts.

> At the confluence of the Ganges and of another river (the Erannoboas) is situated Palibothra (Patna), a city eighty stadia in length and fifteen in breadth. It is in the shape of a parallelogram, surrounded by a wooden wall pierced with openings through which arrows may be shot.[6]
>
> The Indians are divided into seven castes. The first in rank, but the smallest in number, are the philosophers, who are employed by private persons to offer sacrifice or perform any sacred rite, and by kings as counselors in the government of the state. . . . The second caste is that of husbandmen, who constitute a majority of the population and who are a most mild and gentle people, since they are exempt from military service and cultivate their land free from alarm. The third caste consists of shepherds and hunters, who alone are permitted to hunt, to breed cattle, to sell and let out for hire beasts of burden. . . . After the hunters and shepherds follows the fourth caste, those who work at trades, retail wares, and who are employed in bodily labors. Some of these work on their own, paying taxes to the state; others, such as armorers and shipwrights, work for the king alone and are sustained by him. . . . The fifth caste consists of soldiers who, when not on campaign, spend their time in idleness and drunkenness, being maintained at the charge of the king. . . . The sixth caste is that of the Ephori or inspectors, who are intrusted with the surveillance of all that goes on in the kingdom, and who report their findings privately to the king. . . . The seventh caste consists of counsellors of the king. To them belong the offices of the state, tribunals of justice, and the whole administration of affairs. It is not permitted to contract marriage with a person of another caste, nor to pass from one caste to another.[7]
>
> The Indians live happily because of their simple manners and frugal way of life. They never drink wine except at sacrifices. They have, however, a fermented rice drink (arrack). Their food is chiefly a porridge made from rice. . . . In contrast to their simplicity

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[6] Megasthenes as quoted by Strabo in his *Geography*, Bk. XV, Chap. 36, tr. by Hamilton & Falconer in Bohn's Classical Library.

[7] *Ibid.*, Bk. XV, Chaps. 39–41, 46–49.

> in other things, they indulge in ornaments. They wear dresses worked with gold and precious stones and flowered robes, and are attended by persons following them with umbrellas. For indeed they highly esteem beauty, hence take every means to improve their personal appearance. They respect truth and virtue; therefore they do not accord any privilege to the old, unless they possess superior wisdom.[8]
>
> There are two kinds of philosophers, Brachmanes and Garmanes, of whom the former are more esteemed, for they agree more exactly in their teaching. The Brachmanes live in a grove outside the walls of the city, in a moderately large enclosure. They lead a frugal life and recline on straw pallets and on skins. They abstain from animal food and from sexual intercourse. They give their whole time to discourse on deep questions, but especially to discussions on death. For it is their opinion that the present life is the state of one conceived in the womb, but that death to philosophers is birth to a real and happy life. They therefore discipline themselves much to prepare for death, and maintain that nothing that happens to man is good or bad, for otherwise the same thing would not be the occasion of sorrow to some and of joy to others. . . . On many subjects their opinions are the same as those of the Greeks. According to the Brachmanes, the world was created and is liable to corruption; it is of a spheroidal form; the god who made and governs it pervades the whole of it. In addition to the four elements, there is a fifth of which the heavens and the stars are composed. The earth is situated in the center of the universe. . . . Of the Garmanes the most honored are the Hylobii, who live in forests, subsisting on wild fruits, clothed in garments of bark, abstaining from wine and from commerce with women. The kings communicate with the Hylobii through messengers on questions concerning the causes of events, and employ them to worship vicariously and to supplicate the divinity.[9]

Asoka, probably the grandson of Chandra-Gupta, reigned at Patna from 272 to 232 B.C. and was greatest of all Hindu monarchs, conquering Afghanistan and the whole of India north of Madras. Though he founded his empire by blood, he became, after his conversion to Buddhism, an illustrious promoter of morality and religion, a generous patron of corporal works of mercy for the relief of the poor and sick. His edicts enjoining religious and moral conduct and universal kindness to man and beast may still

[8] *Ibid.*, Bk. XV, Chaps. 53–54.
[9] *Ibid.*, Bk. XV, Chaps. 59–60.

be read sculptured on rock throughout his former empire. Buddhism enjoyed its heyday under this convert king, monasteries multiplying on Indian soil and missionaries going forth to the south and to remote China and Japan.

Soon after Asoka's death India relapsed into the old order of a multitude of small, independent rajs. Soon, too, other foreign invaders swooped down to easy conquests. Bactria, a Hellenized Asiatic kingdom on the northeast frontier, annexed the rajs of the Punjab and the upper Ganges about the year 200. An amicable fusion of cultures was going forward between these Graeco-Bactrians and the Hindus when, in the first century B.C., the Scythians shattered Bactria and overflowed into India. One branch of the horde took over the Graeco-Bactrian possessions, while another drove deep into western India. Indo-Scythian rule seems to have been oppressive, so that Hindus and Guptas (probably the descendants of the Graeco-Bactrians) united in A.D. 78 and overthrew the foreign rulers in a fierce battle at Kahror in north-central India. There is no record of what became of the Indo-Scythians, but history tells that the Guptas held a kingdom in Hindustan until the fifth century A.D. With the incursion of the White Huns the Guptas and the kingdom disappeared, while the whole of northern India was harried for half a century by these Mongolic raiders. They were at last weakened by Turkish pressure from the north and then driven out by the rajas, who restored Hindu sovereignty. A pious Chinese Buddhist, on pilgrimage to the holy places of his creed, narrates for the middle seventh century the flourishing state of religion and the beneficent rule of one Siladditya who was acknowledged as overlord by the rajas of Hindustan.

Islam made an assault on Hinduism in the seventh century of our era when Arabs raided the west coast. But it was not until the year 1001 that the Koran and the crescent came to India to stay. At that date Mahmud of Ghazni laid the Punjab under tribute and subsequently annexed it to his Turkish kingdom. The twelfth century saw the fierce Afghans, likewise Mohammedans, overrun the kingdom of their Turkish coreligionists and descend upon India to begin the merciless conquest and persecution which have made their name an anathema even to present-day Hindus. Delhi became the center of their power, from which city their sultan dispatched a series of expeditions which reduced all but a few remote rajs. For three centuries Hindustan groaned under the Afghan scourge. The advent of Baber and his Moguls in the early sixteenth century was even welcomed, since he crushed the oppressor and since the empire which his successor Akbar organized at Delhi, though still Mohammedan, was founded on principles of tolerance and co-operation with Hindus.[10] The Mahrattas, as has been mentioned on a preceding page, never yielded to the Moguls, and their exploits have been transformed into a patriotic Hindu legend.

Xavier's letters picture the Portuguese India of the sixteenth century — a long strip of western coastland shut off from the rest of the country by a mountain chain. It is not a pleasant picture, for Portuguese immorality and rapaciousness furnished the natives with a powerful argument against all that the saint and his companions could say in their preaching of Europe's faith. Nor was the Hindu mind likely to be drawn toward the European way by the empire-scheming of Dupleix, French governor of Pondicherry, nor yet by the methods employed by Robert Clive and his successors in taking over India for the British crown. Father Ernest Hull, S.J., mildly characterizes the British conquest as "an interesting study in ethics."[11] However, abstracting from the ethical problem, we may endorse the judgment of the Abbé Dubois: "If it be possible to ameliorate the condition of the people of India, I am convinced that this desirable result will be attained under the new regime. The justice and prudence which the present rulers display in endeavoring to make these people less unhappy than they have been hitherto; the anxiety they manifest in increasing their material comfort; above all, the inviolable respect which they constantly show for the customs and religious beliefs of the country; and, lastly, the protection they afford to the weak as well as to the strong, to the Brahmin as to the Pariah, to the Christian, to the Mahomedan and to the Pagan: All these have contributed more to the consolidation of their power than even their victories and conquests."[12]

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[10] Tamerlane was an earlier Tatar invader of the Punjab in 1398, but established no kingdom. Mogul capitals were, successively, Delhi, Agra, and Lahore.

[11] Art. "India" in *Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. VII, p. 725.

[12] Dubois, *op. cit.,* pp. 5, 6.

Will this judgment of the observant French missionary soon need revision? Certainly, our good wishes attend the launching of the ships of state India and Pakistan, while every right-minded person salutes the flags of religious tolerance and social reform which they fly. But history alone will tell whether high ideals and the fresh inspiration of independent nationalism can overcome the force of centuries of Hindu-Moslem antipathy and of the caste system. Not encouraging to India's well-wishers have been the atrocities perpetrated in the transfer of minority groups, the war in Kashmir, recent discriminatory legislation against Christians passed by both the Hindu and the Moslem states. (Cf. *America* for August 28, 1948.) Brighter prospects are opened up by the mutual pact between India and Pakistan (early 1950) for the protection of minority groups.

The Hindus, though their literature is extensive, have been so insouciant about the course of their race's history that they have written few annals. They have recorded, however, in detail the progress of Indian thought and religion. Since, naturally, this is the theme we pursue, it will help to draw up a table illustrative of the periods of Indian thought, which may serve as an index of coming investigations.

PERIOD	CHIEF WORKS	TEACHERS	RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS
1000–800 B.C.	*Rig-Veda* or prayer book; *Sama-Veda* or songbook *Yajur-Veda* or ritual	The Brahmin priests	Chief Gods are Varuna the custodian of moral and physical order; Indra a warrior god; Agni a deification of fire. Soma, the sacrificial drink, is also personified as a divinity. Sacrifices are offered of animals, milk, butter, etc. There is a mythology to explain divine, human, and cosmic origins.
800–700 B.C.	*Atharva-Veda* or book of sacred spells; *Brahmanas;* *Aranyakas*	The Brahmin priests; the Hermits of the Forests	A magical efficiency is attributed to sacrifice, in that the performance of sacrificial rites by the Brahmins is understood to force the gods to do that which is asked. The nature-gods fade before the growing figure of an Absolute or Brahma, "considered as the holy power that underlay the world of gods and men." Rise of the recluse or yogin who retired from active life to seek absorption in Brahma and consequent supernatural powers. Crystallization of caste system.

PERIOD	CHIEF WORKS	TEACHERS	RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS
650–500 B.C. (Dates, however, are very uncertain.)	*Upanishads*	Mahadasa, Jubala, Gargi, and many other known and unknown philosophers	The monism implied in the concept of Brahma is developed. This development is helped by belief in transmigration of souls. For to be born to a new state of penitential pilgrimage is a misery from which men cry out to be released. The means of release, according to the Upanishads, is the absorption of individual personality in the One Absolute. That is, man must put off the illusion that he is anything but a part of The Absolute Being.
About 550 B.C.	Various literary and philosophical works	Sankaracarya, *et al.*	A period of skepticism and materialism results from the Upanishads' destructive criticism of Vedic authority. God and immortality are denied; Hedonism is held up as the logical way of life.
About 500 B.C.	A collection of canonical books professedly containing ideas of	Vardhamana, the prophet of the Jainas	A strange atheistic doctrine is preached as a protest against materialism. Soul by high ethical conduct and complete renunciation of goods of the world secures deliverance from rebirth and supreme happiness in a life beyond grave. The doctrine is based upon a bewildering psychology and metaphysics.
About 500 B.C.	*Sutras* (discourses); *Pitakas* (laws); *Vinaya* (monastic rule); *Abhidhamma* (doctrine)	Sakyamuni the Buddha	Suffering and hollowness of life. The root of all this is the desire of life. Therefore all desire is to be repressed. The term is nirvana but it is not clear whether Buddha understood this as annihilation or as absorption into an Absolute Good. Buddhistic ethical teaching is of high order.
200 B.C. to A.D. 600	*Mahabharata*; *Ramayana*	Brahmin priests devoted to Siva and Vishnu	The two national epics are rewritten as religious tracts against Buddhism and in favor of a modified form of Vedism. New are a doctrine of personal love and devotion to the god; the appearance of the Trimurti (threefold divine manifestation) of Brahma-Vishnu-Siva; the atavars (divine manifestations in human form), chief of whom is Krishna; devotion to goddesses such as Durga and Lakshmi.
A.D. 800–1600	Chiefly commentaries on Sacred Books	Samkara, Ramanuja, *et al.*	An attempt is made by a number of men of real genius to put Hindu beliefs into a synthesis which will stand the test of philosophy.

23. Vedic Seer and Brahmin Priest

THE tribes which in the sixteenth century B.C. poured through the Caucasus into the steppes west of the Tigris were worshipers of the great forces of visible nature. Their beliefs, preserved in immemorial oral tradition, were not written down until centuries after the division of the original horde into Medo-Persians and Indo-Aryans. Then appeared the Persian *Avesta* and the Indian *Veda*. Time has proved kinder to the Sacred Books of the Hindu than to those of the Persian; for the overthrow of the Great Kings, neglect on the part of the Magi, sectarian interpolation, the persecuting zeal of Islam have all combined to bequeath us only a badly mutilated text of the Avesta. Chief agencies preservative of the Vedic text are doubtless the deep-rooted race consciousness of the Hindus and the zeal of the Brahmins.

The word *Veda* means in Sanskrit "knowledge." The language of the Vedas is one dialect of Aryan (that of the Persian Avesta being another and closely connected one), related to classical Sanskrit about as Homeric Greek is to Attic. The Indo-Aryans, it is conjectured, were moved to write down the substance of their religious beliefs in order to prevent too great a corruption of these with native Indian beliefs. Thus the date of writing would be — we do not know precisely — between, say, 1300 and 800. Authorship is attributed in the works themselves to certain families of the Brahmin caste whose members are called *rsis* (seers), while the form is mostly metrical.[13]

In the *Rig-Veda* the seers hymn the attributes of the Indo-Aryan nature gods, narrate the mythology that has grown up about them, and laud the efficacy of the fire and Soma sacrifices. The *Sama-* and *Yajur-Vedas* shackle this spontaneous religious emotion in liturgical chains, for they are collections of Rig and other hymns which must be recited at sacrifices; to which are added rubrics and prayer formulae of scrupulous and pharisaical overexactitude. A marked tendency of these two Vedas is to attribute an automatic and magical efficacy to the sacrificial action, in virtue of which the gods are constrained to do the sacrificer's will. Magic, though of another sort, is the characteristic note of the fourth or *Atharva-Veda*—a work which envisages a countless host of demons who plague man's ways and which prescribes the infallible incantations to ward them off or to undo their maleficent deeds.

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[13] *Indian Philosophy,* by S. Radhakrishnan, Vol. I, pp. 64, 66.

The seers who composed the Vedas claimed for themselves an intuitive vision of the truth on the typically Indian theory that when the mind's eye is unclouded by passion it is capable of gazing upon the suprasensible and divine truth. They also speak of themselves as raised to this state of clear vision by the Soma-drink. Revelation and inspiration in the supernatural sense is rather a theory of the Brahmins which first is put forth in the Brahmanas. Vạk, goddess of speech, is said in the Brahmanas to be the mother of the Vedas, or the Vedas are said to have issued like breath from the "self-existent." Thus elevated by the venerated priesthood to a position of infallible authority, the Vedas naturally became a directive norm for India's religious thought and practice. Philosophers, at least those who were not openly iconoclastic, were solicitous about proving their theories by the argument from Vedic Scripture, while the bewildering daily observances of a pious Hindu all stem forth from Vedic prescriptions much as did the Pharisees' observantism from Old Testament texts.

Vedic religion offers a counterpart of Zeus and Jupiter in the transcendent attributes of the sky-god, Varuna. He is resident in the illimitable vault of the heavens whose calm, brilliant light is his chief natural manifestation to men. Over their doings and thoughts he exercises a constant surveillance. He is all-seeing, but also receives reports of human doings through his associate Mitra, the sun-god, and through a corps of spies. He may be propitiated by true repentance. In the *Atharva-Veda* is found the following hymn:

> The mighty Lord on high our deeds, as if at hand, espies:
> The gods know all men do, though men would fain their deeds disguise.
> Whoever stands, whoever moves, or steals from place to place,

> Or hides him in his secret cell — the gods his movements trace.
> Whenever two together plot, and deem they are alone,
> King Varuna is there, a third, and all their schemes are known.
> The earth is his, to him belong those vast and boundless skies;
> Both seas within him rest and yet in that small pool he lies.
> Whoever far beyond the sky would think his way to wing,
> He could not there elude the grasp of Varuna the king.
> His spies descending from the skies glide all this earth around,
> Their thousand eyes all-scanning sweep to earth's remotest bound.
> Whate'er exists in heaven and earth, whate'er beyond the skies,
> Before the eyes of Varuna, the king, unfolded lies.
> The ceaseless winkings all he counts of every mortal's eyes:
> He wields this universal frame, as gamester throws his dice.
> Those knotted nooses which thou fling'st, O God, the bad to snare,
> All liars let them overtake, but all the truthful spare.[14]

The whole order of the physical world keeps constant by his command. Moreover, the other gods must obey him. He himself is subject to no law save Rita, which is to be understood as an abstract idea expressive of universal right order both in the physical and the moral sense. Rita in the Vedas is not a god, but the germ concept from which sprang the Brahma of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads, as well as the monistic Absolute of the philosophers.

Polytheism has a tendency to relegate to the background gods of such transcendent attributes as Varuna. Popular devotion seeks a more earthy divinity, so that even in the Vedas it is the bluff Indra who is most enthusiastically hymned. As divinized nature-force, he is the thunder — a phenomenon which impressed the Indo-Aryans as powerfully as it did the Iranians. It is easy to trace the religious psychology which fashioned Indra. In India where the rains are all important, the crashing of thunder which heralds the end of deadly drought and heat was taken to be the onslaught of a god upon the demon of drought. The Maruts (minor storm gods) had "harnessed the bright red steeds, while the lights of heaven shone forth. They harnessed to the chariot on each side his two favorite bays, the brown, the bold, who carried the hero" (Vedic hymn). Indra had fortified himself with the Soma-drink and with the aid of the Maruts and their father,

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[14] *Atharva-Veda,* IV, 16, transl. by Muir in his *Original Sanskrit Texts.*

Rudra (the lightning), was attacking the stronghold of the demon Vritra. The god's victory released the imprisoned waters which descended upon the parched fields of the grateful Aryan.

Hero in these atmospheric conflicts, Indra was chosen as Aryan god of battles in the conquest of the aborigines, and is addressed in a good fourth of all Vedic hymns. An extension of functions was likewise accorded the Maruts and Rudra. The former took on the attributes of healing-gods, probably because the rains were recognized as chief agents in checking the plagues of India's burning plains. Due to the destructive might of lightning, Rudra grew to be regarded with dread and developed into Siva the Destroyer.

Prayer and sacrifice are the two pillars upon which the entire structure of Vedic religion rests. The good life is pre-eminently the life of worship, though it is possible to trace in the hymns a framework of Aryan theologic tenets and moral standards. To praise the gods ceaselessly, never to allow their divine attention to be distracted from human needs — "glorious wealth in cows, in horses," "wealth with valiant offspring," "an invigorating autumn with quickening rain" — this was what religion chiefly meant. The votary might fruitfully recite the hymns as prayer formulas, but to offer sacrifice he had to call in a Brahmin priest. Over the offering of animal flesh (the Vedas know no taboo on slaying animals), of butter, milk, or cakes, as it lay on a grass mat or was consumed in the fire, the sacred functionary recited the proper hymns and prayers, observing likewise a meticulous rigmarole of gesture and bodily position. Preparation and drinking of the Soma also ranked as sacrificial actions and were surrounded by their own proper ritual. Imbibing this sacred draught, the pious Aryan believed — as did the Iranian drinker of Haoma — that he would acquire healing, health, and wealth. Even more precious effects are claimed by the Vedic poet in the words: "We have drunk Soma, we have become immortal, we have entered into light, we have known the gods."

Prayer is addressed and sacrifice offered to Vedic gods. Yet there are divinities so intimate to these two acts of religion that it is more correct to say that they are the prayer and the sacrifice. Here we have not an example of the naïve naturistic thought which gave birth to Indra, but rather of the nebulously pantheistic bent of the Indo-Aryan mind. Hence we may no more hope to reduce Brihaspati, Agni, and Soma to clear-cut concepts than we may hope to scholasticize Hegel's Monism.

A western mind understands prayer forthrightly. God moves and inspires to it, of course, but the suppliant is not a mere passive instrument whose strings are swept by the divine breath. Rather, man reflects and reasons on the data of his faith, stirring his will to acts of desire and petition. He strives by the process to put through a "person to person call" to the Divine Personality. He is conscious, even painfully so, of the distinction between his own and that Divine Personality. To this western (and, we submit, correct) concept of prayer is opposed the Vedic concept. Brihaspati, "spirit of devotion," is held to be immanent in the prayer formula as well as on the lips and in the mind of him who recites it. There is a virus of pseudo-mystic nonsense in such a theory, a virus which attacks the distinction between the personalities of miserable man and of the God to whom he prays for help. Prayer so becomes a kind of divine manifestation rather than a human groan and cry. A corollary which the authors of the Brahmanas were quick to deduce was that the prayer formulas produced results with a magical and automatic efficacy. Brihaspati, though definitely one of the Vedic gods, is given fewer human attributes than the others nor does he figure prominently in the myths.

As Brihaspati had no entity distinct from the entity of prayer, so Soma's nature cannot be defined except in terms of the Indo-Aryans' drink offering. The basis of the drink was juice pressed out of the stalk of a highland plant and was mildly intoxicant. A myth told that the plant first grew in heaven where its juice gave the gods their immortality, but that an eagle brought it to earth. The notion of an immortalizing food or drink is met with frequently in the various forms of Indo-European religion, hence is probably a notion of hoary antiquity. It is reasonable to conjecture that the Indo-European horde brought the superstition with them into the Iranian plateau. There the idea seems to have undergone a transformation, for the superstition attached itself to a particular plant native to the steppes, while the belief grew that the preparation and drinking of the juice were a sacrificial act.[15] Both the Persian Avesta and the Indian Veda are extravagant in their praise of Haoma (Soma to the Indian) and scrupulous in detailing the ritual for its preparation and drinking.

Soma sacrifice might be offered to other gods, but there was a god himself immanent in the sacred draught, a god who tended to absorb the personality of the sacrificer. This was the god Soma, the god of seizures, of religious ecstasy, of inspiration. Says S. Radhakrishnan: "What we call spiritual vision, sudden illumination, deeper insight, larger charity and wider understanding — all these are the accompaniment of an inspired state of the soul. No wonder the drink that elevates the spirit becomes divine."[16] Again it is hard for our downright western mentality to grasp this fluid concept of identification of votary, religious act, and god; so we had best take the anomaly as a corollary of the thesis that: "East is East and West is West, and ne'er the twain will meet." The god Soma is but little anthropomorphized, nor does he figure much in the myths. The Vedas vaguely identify him with the moon — an identification clearly taught in later times.

Agni, as nature-god, is a personification of fire. For parents he had, as indeed had all the gods, Dyaus (Heaven) and Prathivi (Earth) and was perhaps originally worshiped as a sun-god. His manifestation in the world is manifold. Born anew every morning, he traverses the sky in a brilliant chariot. He resides in the two primitive fire sticks and in the flint stone. He glows as the vital fire in animal and human bodies. But it was the fire which consumed the sacrificial oblations which especially drew the devotion of India and was worshiped as Agni. In his relations with the sacrifice, Agni's personality becomes Protean, for he is at once the messenger who summons the gods to the sacrifice, their charioteer on their journey thither, and a kind of divine Brahmin who offers the sacrifice itself. The other gods lick up the butter and milk which are offered with the tongue of Agni, and eat of the sacrificial meats with his teeth. In accordance, naturally, with the importance attached by the Vedas to sacrifice, this god of sacrifice receives an attention in the hymns second only to Indra.

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[15] The plant has jointed stalks and is almost leafless. Botanically it belongs to the Ephreda group of the Gnetaceae family.

[16] *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 83.

In comparison with the gods already named, the numerous other members of the Vedic Pantheon are relatively unimportant. Four of them, at the least—Surya, Savitr, Vishnu, Pushan—are sun-gods. Apam-napat is god of waters. There is a counterpart of the Greek Eos in the dawn-goddess Ushas; also the Ashvins, twin dawn-gods, resemble in function and popularity the Greek Dioscuri. Besides Vak the goddess of speech already mentioned there are found other divinizations of abstract ideas, such as Manyu or Wrath, Sraddha or Faith, Aditi or Liberation. There is evidence that these abstractions arose from separate personification of various attributes of the older nature-gods.

Indo-European peoples had a common tradition of a conflict waged between the gods and the demons. Greek Zeus and the Olympians fought against the Tritons, Persian Auramazda and his good gods against Ahriman and his Devas. Indian myth, too, peopled the upper air and the earth with maleficent satans. Vritra, the mythical adversary of Indra, grew in the later Vedas into a whole host of aerial demons called Asuras or Dasyus. The *Atharva-Veda* introduces us to the Rakshas who oppose men just as the Asuras oppose the gods. In animal, monstrous, or even human form the Rakshas prowl the earth, eager to devour the sacrificial offerings, to feed on corpses, to enter into the unwary Indian and infect him with disease or madness. They may be warded off by the power of Agni and by magical formulae of which the *Atharva-Veda* furnishes a profusion. It is to be noted that this belief in demons did not imply religious Dualism such as is found in the Persian Avesta.

No one cosmogonic theory is advanced by the Vedas, the various authors following in this their individual intellectual bent. Some accept primitively naïve myths in describing gods building the universe as carpenters build a house, or carving up a primeval giant and making the universe's parts from his members. Still others struggle with a metaphysical theory of origin, either vaguely speaking of an evolution of the existing (*sat*) from the nonexisting (*asat*), or explaining how a god placed in the primeval waters a golden germ which developed into a creator-god who in turn organized the chaos of the waters into the ordered universe.

Yama, begotten of yet another sun-god, Vivanhant, was the first man. After death he was translated to a heaven of happiness conceived on the model of earthly joys. There as lord of the dead he welcomes the souls of those who have dealt righteously and reverenced the gods. Freed of the body, the soul is said to be a shining, spiritual being, yet somehow capable of enjoying satisfactions which are really material. To secure immortal life in Yama's kingdom, a means of special efficacy was the drinking of Soma, as attests the following Vedic hymn:

> Where there is eternal light, in the world where the sun is placed, in that immortal and imperishable world place me, O Soma.
> Where the son of Vivanhant reigns as king, where the secret place of heaven is, where these mighty waters are, there make me immortal.
> Where life is free, in the third heaven of heavens, where the worlds are radiant, there make me immortal.
> Where wishes and desires are, where the bowl of the bright Soma is, where there is food and rejoicing, there make me immortal.
> Where there is happiness and delight, where joy and pleasure reside, where our desires are attained, there make me immortal.[17]

Punishment is the future lot of the impious, for Varuna or Indra will thrust them into a subterranean region, joyless and dark. The Vedic imagination did not dwell upon the details of this life of hell, though later sources run riot in describing the torments there endured. The Vedas do not teach metempsychosis.

Accompanying the Vedas are commentaries, the compositions of Brahmin priests. Called Brahmanas, these commentaries refine on the spontaneous religious ideas of the hymns, which they tend to formalize as Talmuds, Targums, and Midrashim formalized Old Testament religion. Where the Vedas inculcate the holiness and efficacy of prayer and sacrifice, the Brahmanas hedge these religious actions with symbolism and observantism. Omit a word of the formula or fail in precision in making a liturgical gesture, the divinity you seek to propitiate will not hear you. Fulfill the prescriptions to the last minutiae, you compel him to do your will. The Brahmanas develop the simple sacrificial ritual of the Aryans into a complicated mummery of words and bodily attitudes, adding still further confusion by explaining the symbolic sense of every least detail (for instance, certain gestures symbolized certain events of mythology). So complicated did the requirements for sacrifice become that only systematic training qualified the Brahmins for its performance and its various parts were assigned to the care of seven different Brahmin priests.

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[17] Translated by M. Müller in his *Sacred Books of the East,* Vol. I.

The word *brahman* means in the *Rig-Veda* a hymn or prayer addressed to a god. It has been studied how both prayer and sacrifice were thought of as personal divinities. Now in the Brahmanas, which emphasized the automatic omnipotence of liturgically exact sacrifice, the word *brahman* came to mean the omnipotent spirit immanent in sacrifice. This new god, who may be considered as a development of Agni and Brihaspati, is the Brahman (or Brahma) whom the commentaries place before all other gods. Not that the others were denied, but that again, as when Indra threw Varuna into the background, a shift in religious thought had brought Brahma instead of Indra into the focus of attention. Brahma was never furnished with the attributes of a nature-god, so that his appearance marks a notable advance toward the pantheistic monism which was later to dominate Indian religious speculation.

That the Brahmin leaders of the people were sincere and high-minded cannot be doubted in face of the Brahmanas' frequent insistence on the sanctity of duty and their assertion that even sacrifices are unavailing without right living. Truthfulness, kindness, honesty, honor toward parents, respect for the marriage bond are taught. It is certain, however, that to the Brahmanas must be ascribed the beginnings of the enchainment of India's spirit. For it is the Brahmanas which first inculcate the scrupulous observances which make a Hindu's daily life so futilely burdensome: it is the Brahmanas, further, which first make rigid the caste system.

24. Karma and Atman

EVEN while Brahmin priests were buttressing Vedic orthodoxy with their commentaries, free-lancing philosophers had challenged the authority of tradition and struck out on their own in quest of truth. The earliest of these freethinkers may be tentatively dated in the seventh century. Their works are known as *Upanishads* (literally "sitting at the feet of," probably indicative of the dignity of teacher claimed by the authors), and number slightly more than a hundred separate treatises. For most of them it is impossible to name an author. Most frequent literary device is the dialogue, carried on between Vedic gods, puissant rajas, and enlightened hermits.

Bandied back and forth in these fictitious conversations are questions of divine and human origins, of intellectual faculties and the possibility of knowledge, of conduct and future retribution, of individual personality and pantheistic monism as alternate conclusions from the reports of consciousness. Toward the sacred Vedas the disputants adopt an attitude of external respectfulness by quoting doctrines, myths, and practices — in brief, by preserving outer forms undisturbed and repeating refrains to which pious ears have grown accustomed. Yet they deal with the Vedic Scriptures with the same animus which marks higher criticism's dealings with St. John's Gospel. Allegory is read into the naturistic myths of the Aryan seers, while the interpretation which eviscerates is applied to the doctrines of polytheism. It is a testimonial to the tolerance — or perhaps the tortuosity — of the Hindu mind that books so heterodox as the Upanishads took their place beside Vedas and Brahmanas in the curriculum of Brahmin schools. The Hindu scholar was expected to feed upon discordant elements of knowledge and somehow to assimilate them. The Upanishads are in fact "called the Veda-anta, or the end of the Veda, a denomination which suggests that they contain the essence of the Vedic teaching. They are the foundations upon which most of the later philosophies and religions of India rest. . . . Later systems of philosophy display an almost pathetic anxiety to accommodate their doctrines to the views of the Upanishads, even if they cannot father them all on them. Every revival of idealism in India has traced its ancestry to the teaching of the Upanishads."[18]

"The advance of the Upanishads on the Vedas consists in an increased emphasis on the monistic suggestions of the Vedic hymns, a shifting of the center from the outer to the inner world, a protest against the externalism of the Vedic practices and an indifference to the sacredness of the Veda."[19] Two problems, then, haunted these early Indian philosophers: the problem of the divine nature and the problem of the human soul. The ready-made nature gods offered by traditional Indo-European religion might satisfy the unreflecting superstition of the masses, but to the meditation of the recluse they appeared silly caricatures of first causes. Brahma of the Brahmanas, with his immateriality and transcendence, was sensed as a more hopeful divine concept and became the point of departure for the thought of the Upanishads. Secondly, the recluse felt himself cold to the emotions of awe, fear, delight, and wonder which the external manifestations of nature stirred in the unsophisticated. To him a more mysterious world opened when he closed his eyes and reflected on his inner life of thought and feeling, on the elusive factor which went by the name of the conscious Ego. It was all very well for other men to mumble prayer formulas to Indra for "glorious wealth in cows and horses"; for himself he would like to find a god who could confer enlightenment. As will be seen, the Upanishad thinkers finally worked themselves up to the conviction that they actually enjoyed this enlightenment through union with the transcendent Self or Atman.

Indian philosophy rather abhors neat definition of subject matter and terms, as well as the stringency of logical reasoning. Its discussions meander with a pleasant casualness, while it is content to intuit instead of demonstrating its conclusions. For a better understanding on the part of the occidental and scholastic mind, it will do to consider Upanishad thought as a chain of reasoning, whose links are about as follows. From the conviction of *karma* (the individual's load of moral merits or demerits) arises the doctrine of metempsychosis. Since such rebirth is envisaged as an evil, means of escaping it are sought. The means are analysis of the reports of consciousness. From such physical introspection emerges the conviction that the individual self may by proper process secure absorption into the All-Self or Atman-Brahman and thus escape rebirth.

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[18] *Indian Philosophy,* pp. 137, 138.

[19] *Ibid.,* p. 144.

Varuna has appeared in the Vedas as the guardian of an unalterable moral law. This Rita or moral law the Upanishads too preach up, though they dispense with Varuna as its guardian and sanctioner. "According as a man acts and walks in the path of life, so he becomes. He that does good becomes good; he that does evil becomes evil."[20] Since there is no doubt about man's free will, the statement of the ledger of his life, whether written in red or in black, must be inexorably his own, his karma. Two doctrines are quite clear to the Upanishad thinkers. First, a man can no more escape the consequences of his least act than he can escape from his shadow. Secondly, good or evil karma piles up quite independently of any concept of a god offended by human transgressions and demanding satisfaction.

Pessimism tinges the whole doctrine of karma. Something had come over the Indian religious mind since the days when Vedic bards hymned the beneficence and might of Varuna, Indra, and Agni or extolled Soma and fire sacrifices as potent means of propitiating the lords of human destiny. Perhaps the heat of the Ganges valley had sapped the vigor of the Aryan spirit, but, whatever the explanation may be, the joy of life was gone. Life was now a process of auto-intoxication, for the free will was constantly distilling drops of poisoned karma, just as diseased tonsils spread their poison through the body. The possibility of amassing a good karma was not denied, but emphasis was altogether upon the evil.

Metempsychosis was advanced as a corollary from the karma thesis. In all probability the suggestion, at least, of the possibility of rebirth came from the aborigines, for Indo-European eschatology is unfamiliar with such an idea. In some animistic super-

[20] From "The Supreme Teaching," a title of one of the Upanishads.

stition[21] cherished by the aborigines, we may conjecture, the Upanishad philosophers found help to round out the theory of karma. The Vipaka (fruit or retribution) of a man's life was equated according to Vedic teaching, in a future life of heaven or hell. But the gods who were there to punish or to reward had faded out. So the Upanishads seized eagerly on the suggestion that the guilty one will carry his load of guilt into another earthly life. "Even as a caterpillar, when coming to the end of a blade of grass, reaches out to another blade of grass and draws itself over to it, in the same way the soul, leaving the body and unwisdom behind, reaches out to another body and draws itself over to it."[22] Adapting a bit of Vedic eschatology, another Upanishad states: "All who depart from this world, go to the moon. . . . In the dark fortnight it sends them forth into new bodies, raining them down upon this world. And here man is born again either as a worm, or a grasshopper, or a fish, or a bird, or a lion, or a boar, or a serpent, or a tiger, or a man, or some other creature, according to his deeds and his knowledge."[23] Again: "Like corn decays the mortal; like corn is he born again."[24]

No precise mathematics of equivalence seems to have been worked out. That is to say, these early teachers of metempsychosis did not profess to know to just what degree of misery or felicity in his reincarnate life a man's present conduct would doom him. Nor were they clear as to whether rebirths would go on in an indefinite series or whether man might hope finally to die and stay dead. "All that was absolutely certain was that each act of the soul, good or bad, must work out its full effect to the sweet or bitter end."[25]

The Upanishad writers were rather too keen to appeal to the testimony of consciousness in confirmation of the transmigration theory. (Poets, of course, and even some philosophers have toyed with the notion that certain strange impressions and emotions arising in our souls are vestiges of our experiences in some previous life.) The deserving cobbler who is reborn as a Brahmin will have no cobbling recollections to confuse his meditation. However, the passing over of the individual soul, the personal Ego, into the new body, is a doctrine to which the Upanishads stand committed. A corollary of metempsychosis, which has profoundly influenced Hindu customs, is the reverence for animal life.[26]

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[21] Animism holds that animals have souls like men's souls.

[22] From "The Supreme Teaching."

[23] *Kaushitaki Upanishad.*

[24] *Chandogya Upanishad.*

[25] *Origin and Growth of Religion,* by T. W. Rhys Davids (Putnam's Sons, 1886), p. 85.

The prospect of rebirth offers sorry cheer to the heart. Death, which should afford an "out," thus becomes only the entrance to another corridor in the labyrinth of sorrow. Human longing for release from the miseries of our exiled state grows more poignant at the thought that we serve out our present sentence only to begin a new one. Through the Upanishads this cry for release echoes, and to still it is an anxious concern of the sages of old India. They do claim finally to have found a formula which insures mortals against the danger of rebirth. Unfortunately the formula, which we now proceed to expound, is literally the stuff that dreams are made of.

"In dreams," says the *Prasna Upanishad,* "the mind beholds its own immensity." "The Self," says the *Mandukya Upanishad,* "has four conditions. The first condition is the waking life of outward-moving consciousness enjoying outer and gross objects. The second condition is the dreaming life of inner-moving consciousness enjoying the subtle elements of its own light and solitude. The third condition is the sleeping life of silent consciousness when a person has no desires and beholds no dreams. That condition of deep sleep is one of oneness, a mass of silent consciousness made of peace and enjoying peace. The silent consciousness is all-powerful, all-knowing, the inner ruler, the source of all, the beginning and end of all things. The fourth condition is Atman or the Self in His own pure state, the awakened life of supreme consciousness. It is neither the outer nor the inner consciousness, neither semi-consciousness nor sleeping consciousness, neither mere consciousness nor unconsciousness. He is the Atman, the spirit Himself, that cannot be seen or touched, that is above all distinction, beyond thought and ineffable. In the union with Him is the supreme proof of His reality. He is the end of evolution and is non-duality."[27]

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[26] This is the view of S. Radhakrishnan. The Abbé Dubois thinks that not the belief in transmigration of souls, but rather a superstitious theriolatry, is the reason why Hindus will not kill animals. However, taboo on killing animals is universal, while only a few such as the cow and the monkey are worshiped. The rebirth doctrine, then, is a better explanation.

The last sentence of the preceding quotation is the key. Reality is not what it seems to be: a universe of individual personal subjects registering impressions from an external order. This is the fatal illusion "that makes calamity of so long life." For if I cherish the illusion of my own separate personality, I shall remain bound by way of punishment on the torture wheel of life-death-rebirth. On the other hand, I can painlessly shuffle off this mortal coil by cherishing monistic faith that I and the Atman are ontologically one.

The Upanishads' interesting thesis labels the individual *Ego* as a pure illusion. Is the phenomenal external world similarly disposed of? The answer is unclear in the documents, for some texts imply that the cosmos is the visible and tangible vesture of the one Atman, while others seem to say that belief in the external object of thought is as great a mistake as belief in the thinking Ego.

The goal to be striven for is obviously an unselfish one, but in a very sinister sense. The individual self is not to mortify unworthy desires and abstain from lower satisfactions with a view to obtaining final rest in the enjoyment of the Supreme Good, but must find contentment, such as it is, by dropping out of the picture altogether. He is called upon to commit pseudo-metaphysical hara-kiri: the Atman, the One Reality, will roll along, like the car of Jagannath, over the liquidated illusory self. There is, then, in the scheme of things no reward to which the individual may aspire, nor is the teaching of the Upanishads on this head obscure. For the lower (the illusory) self, so the Indian sages tell us, there will continue the illusion of rewards and penalties in successive rebirths. But for the enlightened the one consummation devoutly to be wished is the be-all and the end-all of complete annihilation. The deep pessimism of such a conclusion is not brightened by all that the Upanishads have to say about the glories of the transcendent Atman. These descriptions are for me personally a Barmecide feast.

Above there has been noted an evolution in the meaning of the word *brahma* in the Vedas and Brahmanas. The evolution continues in the Upanishads until finally the word becomes synonymous with Atman. The praises of Brahma-Atman constitute India's parallel to Egypt's Atonic Hymns, to Plato's theologic rhapsodies, and to other of natural religion's clearer intuitions of the divine nature.

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[27] *Mandukya Upanishad.*

> The Spirit fills all with his radiance. He is incorporeal and invulnerable, pure and untouched by evil. He is the supreme seer and thinker, immanent and transcendent. He placed all things in the path of eternity.[28]
>
> What cannot be thought with the mind, but whereby the mind can think. Know that alone to be Brahman, the Spirit; and not what people here adore.[29]
>
> The Atman, the Self, is never born and never dies. It is without a cause and is eternally changeless. It is beyond time, unborn, permanent and everlasting.[30]

By means of a curious allegory the *Kena Upanishad* inculcates Brahma's transcendence. He had won a victory for the gods (who for purposes of the story are for the moment supposed to be real). They in their pride think that it is themselves who have won the war. Brahma then appears to them incognito and they wonder who this marvelous Being is. He challenges their power, placing a straw before them. In vain does Agni the god of fire try to burn it, Vayu the god of the whirlwind to whisk it away. Brahma then disappears, but a lady of radiant beauty, who is Uma or divine wisdom, appears in his stead. Her they ask who may be the wonderful being they have just encountered. "He is Brahma, the Spirit Supreme," she replies. And from this, the story concludes, comes it that Agni and Vayu are greater than the other gods because they have learned Brahma's greatness.

Though the Upanishads do not answer definitely whether or not the external world is real, they do propose an origin theory. All things emanate from Brahma-Atman.

> In the beginning the Creator longed for the joy of creation. He remained in meditation and then came Rayi or matter and Prana or life. "These two," thought he, "will produce beings for me."[31]
>
> Life comes from the Spirit. Even as a man casts a shadow, so

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[28] *Isa Upanishad.*

[29] *Kena Upanishad.*

[30] *Katha Upanishad.*

[31] *Prasna Upanishad.*

> the Spirit casts the shadow of life, and as a shadow of former lives a new life comes to the body.[32]
>
> Even as a spider sends forth and draws in its thread, even as plants arise from the earth and hairs from the body of a man, even so the whole creation arises from the eternal.[33]

Real or unreal (the question must remain open), the external world is to be explained so as in nowise to detract from the Oneness and the Allness of Brahma-Atman. As above Emanationism is shown to be the explanation of origins rather than Creationism, so here the Upanishad thinkers incline toward Pantheism in explaining how the cosmos holds together rather than toward the thesis that visible objects are contingent beings dependent upon an Absolute Being. To quote:

> In space He is the sun, and He is the wind in the sky; at the altar He is the priest and the Soma wine in the jar. He dwells in men and in gods, in holy sacrifice and in the vast sky. He is in the earth and in water and in the mountain rocks. He is Truth and Power.[34]
>
> There is one Ruler, the Spirit that is in all things, who transforms His one form into many.[35]
>
> Far spreading before and behind, and right and left, and above and below, is Brahman, the Spirit eternal. In truth Brahman is all.[36]

Famed is the dialogue between the sage Brahmin Aruneya and his son Svetaketu. The latter, desiring to know the ultimate nature of reality, is bidden by his father to bring a fruit of the banyan tree. Breaking the fruit, the boy finds very small seeds. Breaking one of these, he finds nothing within. "My son," says Aruneya, "from the very essence in the seed which you cannot see comes in truth this vast banyan tree. Believe me, my son, an invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe." Svetaketu is then told to mix salt with a bowl of water. He is then bidden to try and see the salt and to taste the water. "O my son," then teaches the old man, "neither can you see the Spirit, but He is in the whole world. An invisible and subtle essence is this Spirit of the universe. That is reality. That is Truth. Thou, too, art That."[37]

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[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Mundaka Upanishad.*

[34] *Katha Upanishad.*

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Mundaka Upanishad.*

[37] *Chandogya Upanishad.*

25. Jainism and Buddhism

THE great thoughts together with the errors of the Upanishads went to swell the deposit of India's sacred lore. We cannot, for the present at least, follow the steps of philosophers such as Samkara and Ramanuja, founders respectively of famous schools of Idealism and Realism upon Upanishad foundations, since to do so would lead us out of the main highway of Hindu religious development. It is significant that shortly after the principal Upanishads were written, Brahmin priests edited the *Sutras.* These latter are obviously attempts to safeguard Vedic orthodoxy against the rationalizing of the philosophers. Where the Upanishads teach that: "Those who worship, thinking 'we have done sacrifices and pious works,' attain only the regions of the moon and return to life and death," the Sutras reassert the efficacy of the old Aryan ceremonies, prayers, and sacrifices. Against the Upanishads' annihilation of the gods before the face of the one Atman, the Sutras preach up the claims to worship of Agni, Indra, and the rest. The Sutras, then, are a species of *Liber Devotionum* put in the hand of the Indian to nourish his Vedic piety.

Attention has been called to the peculiar sense in which the Vedas were held to be revealed and inspired books (cf. above, p. 159). About the sixth century prophetism of this sort experienced a revival in the persons of Vardhamana and Gautama. The first will not detain us long. He claimed to be the twenty-fourth in a series of seers, though the truth of the matter seems to be that he merely rounded out into a synthesis ideas that had been bandied about for several centuries among philosophically minded members of the aristocracy. His synthesis leans heavily on the Upanishads, from which he borrows the doctrines of karma and of rebirth. He likewise sees a way of escape from rebirth. By the absolute renunciation of possessions and desires, together with perfect ethical conduct, man becomes an *arhat* or superman. After death such a one will enter into bliss that has no end. He will not receive this bliss as a reward bestowed by God. For Vardhamana saw no need for God or gods, since he thought the universe and man along with it to be self-originated and self-sustaining. The atheistic tenet was soon abandoned by the Jaina sect which he founded. They simply reinstated the Vedic gods whom Vardhamana had dispossessed of their perquisites of worship. Today Jainism counts one and a quarter million adherents in India.

Contemporary with the rise of Jainism was that of more important Buddhism. The prince, whom more than six hundred million souls today revere as the founder of their faith, was the son of the king of Kapila, a territory lying north-northwest of Calcutta on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. The fact that this region is a borderland opens up an intriguing speculation. Its prince might have been non-Indian, hence wanting in reverence for Brahminic tradition and prone to heresy.[38] The prince was named Siddhartha, though he goes more frequently by other names: Buddha (the enlightened), Sakyamuni (the Holy Man of the Sakya family), and others. His biography will not detain us here, as it is detailed in a future chapter.

Of Buddha's doctrine there is no written formulation prior to the early first century B.C., when in Ceylon the *Pitakas* (Baskets of the Law) were written. The Pitakas are divided into: (*a*) dialogues in which Buddha himself speaks; (*b*) doctrines attributed to him by a council of his followers assembled after his death; and (*c*) rules for monastic life attributed to him. For the preservation of his genuine teaching from the early fifth century B.C. (approximately the date of his death) to the early first century there was no vehicle save oral tradition. When due weight is given to the facts that already in the fourth century B.C. eighteen Buddhist sects had sprung up,[39] and that still further divisions among the "faithful" followed, it is seen that we will never know very precisely what words of wisdom flowed from the lips of King Suddhodana's son as he wandered through the Ganges valley. The same uncertainty clouds the discourses which Ashvaghosa in the first century of our era attributes to Buddha in the Buddhacarita. What we know as Buddha's doctrine could, therefore, more properly be called Buddhistic.

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[38] Bacot, Jacques, *Le Bouddha* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1947).

[39] Rhys Davids, in *The Sects of Buddhism.*

Buddha trusted wholly that interior illumination or subjective conviction which has been the refuge of prophets of unreason from antiquity down to the days of *Mein Kampf*. Quite sure of his plenary inspiration, he made free with the ankylotic traditions of the Brahmins and won from these gentry the name of heretic. Toward their nature-gods he was indifferent, not needing them in his radically atheistic philosophy. Yet he did not feel called on to reprobate these favorites of popular devotion. He even introduced them in the parables through which he symbolized his own teaching. It seems probable that he regarded them as an order of *daimones* of superior endowments, but bound like men on the wheel of karma and rebirth and needing his teaching to secure release. Cult practices he tolerated, whether from a lingering belief in their efficacy or from condescension to popular superstition. But he was bitter against the extravagant claims of the sacrificial system and the concomitant exactions of the Brahmin priests. He efficaciously sacrifices, he taught, who slays the desires of his own heart and so frees himself from life's miseries.

Superficially Buddha's doctrine closely resembles the orthodoxy of the Vedanta, i.e., of the Upanishads. Both fatalistically accept karma and metempsychosis; both long for deliverance from these two chains which bind man to the wheel of life; both seek this deliverance through similar yogas of mind and body. But for the Vedantist these chains were to be broken by putting away the illusory consciousness that he was a separate and individualized person; for the Buddhist, by doing to death the desire for anything whatsoever. Furthermore, the Vedanta offers, as term and reward, absorption in the All-Soul Brahman, while Buddha teaches release pure and simple as the be-all and the end-all. He has no teaching on God, on Atman, or on Brahman. Asked whether Nirvana were absorption (into an All-Soul) or mere annihilation, he either kept silent or reproved the questioner for futile curiosity.

He taught for more than fifty years, binding a group of disciples to himself with ties of personal devotion. He appointed no successor, believing that "the truth" would prove potent enough to dispense with any authoritative interpreter. Doctrinal anarchy naturally resulted, and it became necessary to call a council of those who had heard him, to determine on some sort of orthodoxy. Other councils followed in later centuries, but were only partially successful in securing unity of teaching. Gradually there evolved four great schools of Buddhist thought, while the unity of faith and practice among Buddhists throughout the world came to resemble closely the "unity" enjoyed by Protestantism. Transcending doctrinal differences is a common devotion to the person of the founder. This legacy of devotion Buddha somehow has handed down through the ages, together with the monastic ideal to which he gave the impulse. But for its monks, as will be shown later on, Buddhism would in all likelihood have attained no greater historical stature than its contemporary Jainism.

In future chapters will be attempted a fuller study of Sakyamuni and the movement he initiated. Certain facets of Buddhist history may here be noted. First, the esoteric has always been strongly differentiated from the exoteric. While monks and scholars have ranged far afield in subtle speculations or tried their wings in dizzy flights of contemplation, the millions of the faithful, content with a blind faith and a modicum of knowledge, have vented their religious sentiment through bells, incense, talismanic prayer formulas, and showy pageants. Secondly, to Buddhism's credit must be placed the relatively good ethical standards which it disseminated through the Far East. True, these standards do not rival in comprehensiveness the Christian code, and are not rooted in the love of God and neighbor, but to a degree they have served as a "light of Asia." Thirdly, in the religious psychology of Buddhism the imagination has held and holds the hegemony. Neither reason nor faith, but psychopathic fancy is at the controls when the crowd reiterates to hoarseness the *Namu Amida Butsu* or when the bonze rises in his yogaship to the bright blue yonder of nirvana. In metaphysics, moral outlook, and psychology Buddhism is so definitely oriental that it is no mere accident of history that its propaganda never succeeded in the western world. The statement stands true despite the odd phenomenon of "California Buddhism," whose japeries can only amuse the earnest practician and the informed student of Buddhism.[40]

Buddhists make up only a tiny minority group among India's millions, but the spirit of Sakyamuni has left deep marks upon triumphant Hinduism. In particular, the world weariness of Hindu psychology is a legacy from his preaching on the futility of desire and striving. Buddhist ethics of nonviolence, sympathy, and kindness have contributed to the mildness of the national character.

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[40] Cf. Bacot's *Le Bouddha* and Steinilber-Oberlin's *The Buddhist Sects of Japan.*

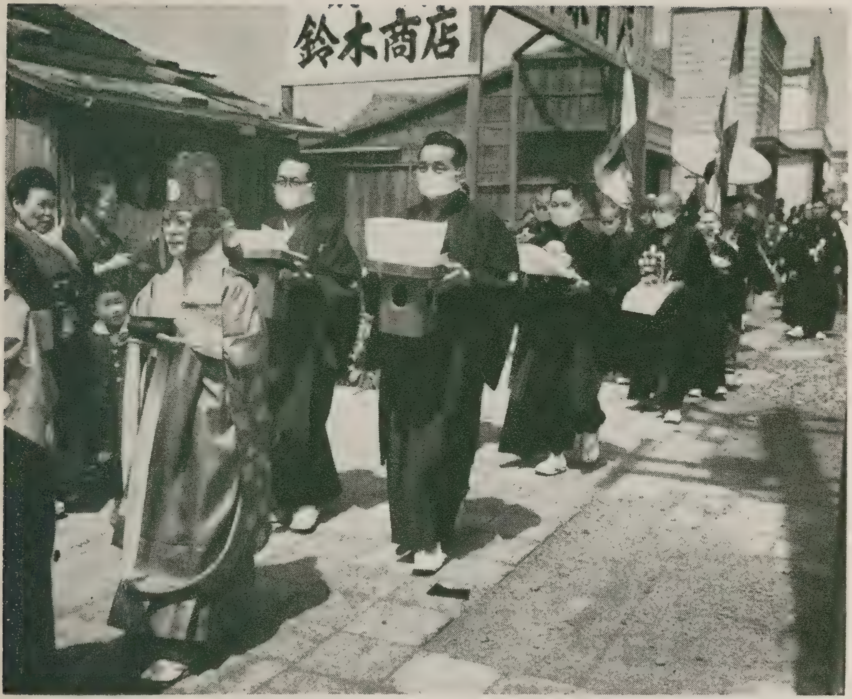
Why and by what stages Buddhism declined in the land of its origin, is recorded only imperfectly in history. The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* hint at bitter opposition from the Brahmins. Apart from Asoka in the third century B.C. and Kanishka in the first century B.C., it does not appear that Buddhism enjoyed royal patronage. A fatal split occurred in the first century B.C. between southern (Rigorist or Hinayana) and northern (Liberal or Mahayana) Buddhists. The Hinayana, moreover, failed to win converts, because it had nothing to offer but an austere and atheistic morality. The Mahayana, on the other hand, freely adopted the gods of older Brahminism and tended to become quite indistinguishable from it. Future chapters will go further into the causes for the decay of Indian Buddhism. For the seventh century A.D. a Chinese pilgrim to Buddhism's holy places testifies to this grievous decay. Devout men still come from afar to these holy places — to Kapilavastu where Siddhartha was born, to Bohd Gaya where he received supreme enlightenment, to Benares where he first preached, to Kusinara whence he passed to nirvana. In these spots, set in the midst of teeming Hinduism, ruined monasteries, shrines, and relic towers stand as memorials of the passing of the Enlightened One through the valley of the Ganges.

26. Emergence of Hinduism

THROUGHOUT India the two national epics are perennially popular reading. Bhishma, Arjuna, Rama, and the other Aryan heroes of the poems stir the emotions of patriotism and racial pride. The lushness of the narrative and its interminable episodes delight the story-loving Indian. However, the epics maintain their place as "best sellers" chiefly because they are "sacred scripture," popularly accepted though never officially admitted into the canon.

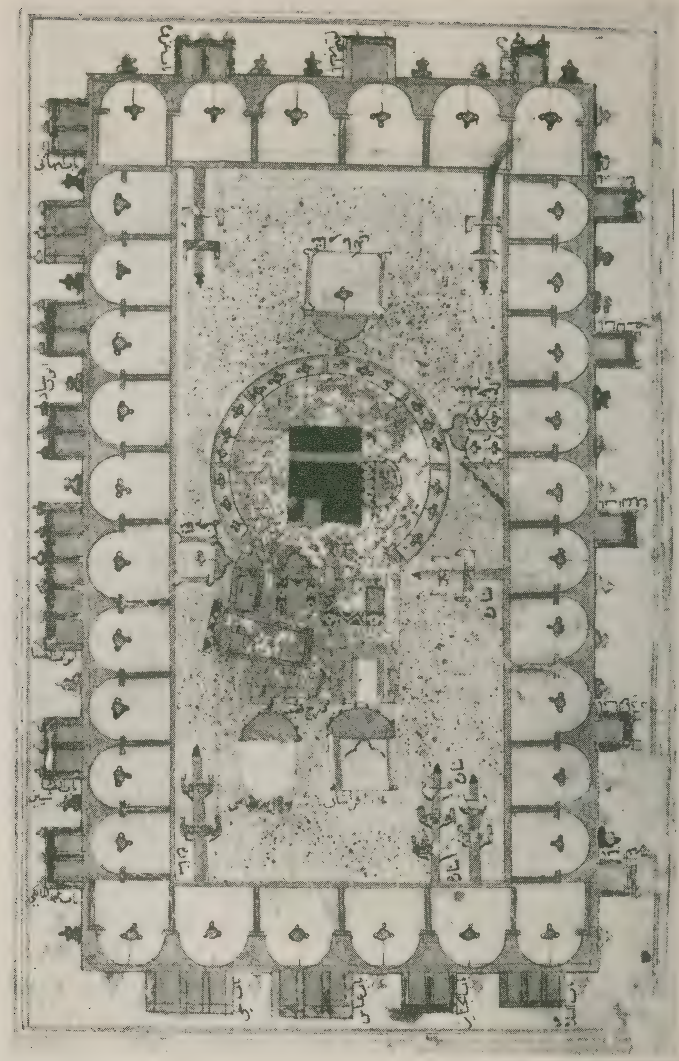
Minstrelsy was the first literary vehicle of the long strife between Panchalas and Kurus, of the adventures of the exiled prince Rama. The bards supplied the heroic histories with a preternatural machinery of Vedic gods and goblins. Fact and fancy thus conspired to form *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* as analogues of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Were we to suppose that Pythagoreans and Orphics of the sixth century had rewritten the Homeric epics with the purpose of interpolating their own beliefs in the revered text, we would have an idea of what happened in fact to the two Indian epics. Not one but many interpolators meddled tendentiously with India's heroic legends between the years 500 and 200 B.C. There were spokesmen for the two Brahminical sects of Vishnaism and Shivaism, for a conciliatory Brahminical party; devotees of Krishna and Durga, divinities taken over from the aborigines; philosophers with a new illumination on the mysteries of karma and rebirth. When at last (perhaps at a date close to our own era) the texts of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* were allowed to rest from the torturing of interpolators, the epics had been transformed into an unsystematic and voluminous encyclopedia of Indian religion.

What is most remarkable is that the farrago became "a fifth *Veda*" and the common folk's Bible. The wisdom of the four



WIDE WORLD PHOTO

Fig. 16. A BUDDHIST RITE. A *bonzessa* bearing incense leads *bonzes* bearing food offerings. They are marching through a Tokyo street to the dedication of a new Buddhist shrine. Buddhist monasticism dates back to Sakyamuni's own day, and has contributed much to the religion's propagation.



METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Fig. 17. KAABA SHRINE AT MECCA. Immemorially sacred to the pagan Arabs, the Kaaba stone and shrine at Mecca could not be abandoned by Islam. Mohammed accordingly approved and rationalized the old pagan worship by "revelations" from Allah (Chapters 2, 22 of *Koran*).

Vedas, it would seem, had come through the Brahminical school system to be accessible only to the higher castes. Besides no natural religion can be static and the centuries had made current among the people a vast amount of non-Vedic cults and practices. The expanded epics incorporated all these living religious factors, together with the best solution the philosophers had of the national problem worries of karma and rebirth. Neither could the Brahmins condemn books which respected their authority and popularized much of their teaching.

Hinduism is the name given to the religion taught in the Indian epics (revised as above). It is a syncretic religion, rather like a lake formed by a number of streams of thought and of religious experience which had meandered on Indian soil for centuries. Hinduism does not profess consistency between its manifold tenets, nor shall we attempt to present it as a unified system. For the present, notice will be taken of three Hindu beliefs which are prominent in the epics and are distinctly non-Vedic: the Trimurti (the three forms of God); the Avatars (the various descents of a god to earth in human shape); the doctrine of Bhakti (unselfish fulfillment of duties as a means to escape rebirth).

Of the three gods—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—who are joined in the Trimurti, Brahma has been sufficiently noticed in preceding pages. (Cf. pp. 166, 172 ff.) Vishnu appears in the Vedas as a sun-god who dwells "where even the birds dare not fly," but who strides whither he will through the universe, to succor the clients who invoke him. Under another aspect he is said in the Vedas to have the earth for his body. The Brahmanas speak of him as the champion of the gods against the demons, whom he outwits or defeats, but especially do these Brahminical commentaries in some texts nominate him to the exalted post of god of the sacrifice, thus equating him to Brahma himself. Even Upanishad philosophers respect Vishnu as a form of the one Atman-Brahma. With all this in his favor—Vedic peerage, popular confidence, sacerdotal blessing, and philosophers' approval—Vishnu grew in importance until he became chief god of the powerful sect of Vishnaism.

Shiva is the Vedic "red boar of the sky, the god with braided hair, the blazing form," the lightning-god Rudra whom the early

Aryans implored not "to hurt us in our kith and kin, nor in our own life, not in our cows nor in our horses." Though he is open to impetration and is even flattered as "the god of a thousand remedies," his destructive might is always foremost in his votaries' minds. (The name Shiva, or Siva, is first used for Rudra in the Brahmanas.) (Cf. p. 165 above.) Dread, then, rather than affection transformed him gradually into a chief god in the sect called Shivaism. The sect held him the cause of all, on whom all else depended. The sect had its own yoga of practices which could lead man to union with Shiva and render him partaker of the god's power and knowledge.

The inroads made by heterodox Buddhism upon a field which the Brahmins considered their own probably stimulated the formulation of the doctrine of the Trimurti. There was need for a united front among followers of the legitimate Vedic tradition. But the esoteric doctrine of the intellectual classes was either the monism of the Brahmins' first principle Brahma or else the monism of the Upanishads' All-self Atman. The people, still unashamedly polytheistic, offered prayers and sacrifices to either Vishnu or Shiva as chief god and to the rest of the Vedic family as subordinate gods. A confederation of three sovereign gods was the compromise thought out by Brahminical ingenuity, the Trimurti of Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva. In its esoteric sense—that is, as understood by enlightened Brahmins and philosophers—this signifies the three relations of the One Divine to the world, the relations namely of creator, conserver, and destroyer. Thus understood, the Trimurti expresses a form of Nominalism, reminiscent of the Nominalism proposed by Abelard as an explanation of the Trinity. In its exoteric sense—that is, as understood by the incorrigibly polytheistic and unphilosophical multitude—it means the apportionment of the major divine functions among three powerful and distinct Vedic gods. In practice through the centuries, it has meant that the Hindu has subscribed to the Trimurti formula, but has brought his rice cakes and his flowers to a Vishnu temple or a Shiva temple, according as his ancestors were Vishnaites or Shivaites. Brahma has never appealed to popular devotion and owns one lone temple, that of Pokhar.

From very ancient times Indians believed that at periods of human distress gods came in human forms to succor their votaries. The "miraculous" coming of Buddha was a story spun on this theme, for it was said that Siddartha was a divine being who took compassion on men's blindness and came to earth as enlightener. Several such avatars (gods in human shape) are found in the revised epics. The two worthy of comment are Rama of the *Ramayana* and Krishna of the *Mahabharata*, both of whom are avatars of Vishnu.

The original story of the *Ramayana* is that of Rama the pious prince of Oude who, rather than dispute the succession settled by his father upon a half brother, went into exile among the aborigines to the south of the Ganges. He is followed by his wife Sita, who is captured by a chief of the aborigines. Rama rescues her and she submits to an ordeal in proof of her innocence. After eight years of fighting with the aborigines, Rama, having fulfilled the term of his exile, returns to Oude where his half brother, Bharata, cheerfully abdicates in his favor. In the monstrous revision of this pretty epic, the chief of the aborigines is made a demon-king who defies the gods and will not permit the religious solitaries to concentrate on their prayers and penances. The gods are anxious, so Vishnu volunteers to be born in the royal family of Oude to take up the cudgel against the demon-king. The latter carries off Rama's wife Sita (who is also a divine being in human shape). With the aid of the monkeys under their king Hamuman, Rama wages a long war, slays the demon-king, and rescues Sita. The Hindus have so great devotion to Rama that they never tire of chanting his name in supplication for protection against the demons who hover thick in the Indian air.

A yet more important avatar is Krishna of the *Mahabharata*. (He may have been one of the warrior princes in the original epic form, but it is impossible to be sure of this.) When the child, avatar of Vishnu, is soon to be born of his mother, Devaki, an uncle, the king Kamsa, learns of a prophecy that the child will slay him and take his throne. He plans to slay Devaki, but the child's father, Vasudeva, promises that he will abandon the child to his will. Krishna is born as a beautiful infant and at once engages his parents in spiritual conversation. Vasudeva carries him to the dwelling of some shepherds and changes him for the infant girl of one of the women there. Kamsa, when Vasudeva returns, seizes the child and dashes it against a wall, or rather attempts to do so, for the infant changes into a goddess. Still determined to do away with Krishna, Kamsa sends his servants to kill all the newborn children in the neighborhood, but the gods prevent the slaughter. Krishna grows up among the shepherds under the care of Nanda and Yasoda, who think that he is their own child. Unhindered by moral inhibitions (or, as the Vishnaites explain, being above the law), he spends his boyhood in petty larceny, his adolescence in dalliance with the shepherdesses. In manhood he slays his uncle, Kamsa, engages in various wars, builds a city to lodge the children of his many wives. During the course of his adventures he has offended a holy ascetic, who curses him, and as the result of the curse the "incarnate" Vishnu dies pierced by a huntsman's arrow.[41]

Previously, however, in the ten days' battle near Hastinapur which concludes the war between Panchalas and Kurus, Krishna engages as charioteer to the hero Arjuna. The latter, when battle is about to be joined, is smitten with remorse at the prospect of spilling the blood of kinsmen and former friends.

> These, though they smite me, I would not smite, O Krishna, even for the sake of empire over the three worlds, much less for the sake of the earth.
> In the destruction of a stock perish the ancient laws of the stock; when law perishes, lawlessness falls upon the whole stock.
> When lawlessness comes upon it, O Krishna, the women of the stock fall to sin; and from the sin of the women castes become confused; confusion of caste brings to hell.
> So spake Arjuna, and sat down on the seat of his chariot in the field of war; and he let fall his bow and arrows, for his heart was heavy with sorrow.[42]

But Krishna will not let him emulate the pacifism of Ferdinand the Bull, so assails him with arguments to move him to perform his present duty as a warrior. His discourse is the *Bhagavadgita,* called the Song of the Lord Krishna, and rated as the greatest of Hindu classics. In substance it far transcends the solution of Arjuna's case of conscience and essays to offer a complete religious philosophy.

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[41] From this synopsis are omitted the many vain prodigies ascribed to Krishna.

[42] *Mahabharata,* Bk. VIII, L. D. Barnett's trans. Book VII concludes with a council of war. Book VIII opens with the armies arrayed for the battle. Then follows the discourse between Arjuna and Krishna which is called the *Bhagavadgita*. The *Bhagavadgita* is divided into lessons. The quotation is from Lesson the First.

The emotions of regret and joy, says Lord Krishna, are huge mistakes. What are these kinsmen and friends whom Arjuna scruples to kill but bubbles cast up by the ceaselessly flowing stream of Being (Atman-Brahma)? Slain, they will relapse into the stream and be succeeded by other bubbles in the predestined cycle of rebirth. Nothing in life's experience, then, must disturb a man. He must

> Cast off all desires and walk without desire, with no thought of a Mine and an I, and so come unto peace.
> This is the state of abiding in Brahma, O son of Pritha. If even at his last hours he dwell in it, he passes to extinction in Brahma.[43]

To Arjuna's objection that this principle implies that we should abandon all effort and give ourselves to pure contemplation, Krishna replies:

> Do thine ordained work; for work is more excellent than no-work. Even the subsistence of thy body cannot be won from no-work.[44]

Caste duties, such as Arjuna's warrior duties of slaughtering his opponents, are part of the set order of things, and he who neglects them sins himself and causes others to sin by his example. The work of sacrifice is to be performed ceaselessly, for by the sacrifices the gods grow fat and strong and are able to protect and shower down gifts on men. It is not the performance of work that keeps men bound in the chains of the senses and whirling on the wheel of rebirth, but rather selfish seeking of the rewards of their works. Seeking pleasure and wealth and power, they may get these, but punishment in hell will follow, and after hell will come rebirth. Seeking even to please the gods by Vedic ritual and sacrifice, they will receive temporal blessings and some reward in heaven, but when their deposit of merit is exhausted, rebirth will come. The only "out," says Krishna, is to work as though we did not work. And how? Avoid attachment to any conceivable personal reward of your works.

> The man whose every motion is void of love and purpose, whose works are burned away by the fire of knowledge, him the enlightened call truly learned.

[43] *Ibid.*, Lesson the Second.
[44] *Ibid.*, Lesson the Third.

> Free from attachment to fruit of works, everlastingly contented, unconfined, even though he be engaged in work he does not work at all.
> Whoso, being without craving, restrained of mind, surrendering all possessions, does but work of the body's office gets no defilement.
> Happy in what chance brings him, void of envy, indifferent alike whether he gain or gain not, even in working he becomes not fettered.[45]

Such a man is "like a lamp in a windless spot which flickers not." His one preoccupation is to secure "unselfing," the realization of absolute absorption in the One Real Self or Atman-Brahma. Once fixing his mind in this resolve, he may indeed through inconstancy (as Arjuna objects) fall short of perfection in his pursuit. However (explains Krishna), in his next rebirth he will start out with that degree of dispassionateness which his present efforts have attained. Finally, in some indefinitely future rebirth he will make himself perfect (or rather get rid of himself completely) and pass out for good, absorbed in Atman-Brahma.

"The Lord" speaks again:

> This unaltering rule I declared to Vivasvat; Vivasvat declared it to Manu, and Manu told it to Ishvaku.
> Thus did kingly sages learn the rule; but by length of time it has been lost.
> Now this ancient rule is declared by me to thee, for that thou art devoted to me; for it is a high mystery.[46]

Arjuna, still obtuse, subsumes:

> Near was thy birth and far off was the birth of Vivasvat. How may I understand that thou didst declare the rule in the beginning?[47]

"The Lord" answers:

> Though birthless and unchanging of essence, and though lord of born beings, yet in my sway over nature I come into birth by my own magic.
> For whensoever the law fails and lawlessness uprises, O thou of Bharata's race, then do I bring myself to earth;

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[45] *Ibid.*, Lesson the Fourth.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Ibid.*

> To guard the righteous, to destroy evildoers, to establish the law, I come into birth age after age.[48]

While the "conch-shells, drums, tambors, gongs, and trumpets" are still sounding the charge to battle, Krishna then plunges into a theological (or rather pantheological) lecture.

Vishnu the Supreme, besides his unmanifested nature, has two manifested natures which are Matter and World-Soul.

> Learn that from these twain are sprung all born beings; the source of the whole universe and its dissolution am I.
> There is naught higher than I; all this universe is strung upon me, as rows of gems upon a string.[49]

Vishnu, as being The All, demands absolute devotion (*bhakti*) to himself as a condition of final release from rebirth and of absorption in himself.

> They whose vows are made to the gods, go to the gods; they whose vows are to the fathers, go to the fathers; they who offer to ghosts, go to ghosts; they who offer to me, go to me.
> If one of earnest spirit set before me with devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I enjoy this offering of devotion.
> Whatever be thy works, thine eating, thy sacrifice, thy gift, thy mortification, make it an offering to me.
> Thus shalt thou be released from the bonds of works fair or foul of fruit; thy spirit inspired by casting off of works, thou shalt be delivered and come unto me.
> I am indifferent to all born beings; there is none whom I hate, none whom I love. But they that worship me with devotion, dwell in me and I in them.
> Even though he should be a doer of exceeding evil that worships me with undivided worship, he shall be deemed good, for he is of right purpose.
> Speedily he becomes righteous of soul, and comes to lasting peace; be assured that none who is devoted to me is lost.
> For even they that be born of sin – women, traffickers and serfs – if they turn to me, come to the supreme path.[50]

Arjuna asks, as a sign, that Krishna show himself in his divine form. Thereat:

[48] *Ibid.*
[49] Lesson the Seventh.
[50] Lesson the Ninth.

> The great lord showed to Pritha's son his sovran form supreme,
> Of many mouths and eyes, of many marvelous aspects, of many divine ornaments, with uplifted weapons many and divine;
> Wearing divine flower-chaplets and robes, with anointments of divine perfumes; compound of all marvels, the boundless god facing all ways.
> If the light of a thousand suns should of a sudden rise in the heavens, it would be like to the light of that mighty being.
> There the son of Pandu beheld the whole universe in its manifold divisions lodged in that body of the god of gods.[51]

After further repetitious discourse, Krishna demands of Arjuna if he be converted to the rule of *bhakti,* or self-surrender, and prepared to do his duty as a member of the warrior caste:

> Surrendering all the laws, come for refuge to me alone. I will deliver thee from all sins. Grieve not.
> Hast thou heard this, O son of Pritha, with wholly intent mind? Has thy bewilderment of ignorance vanished away?[52]

Arjuna compliantly girds himself for battle, while the god, who has just discoursed on mysteries of human and divine life, turns his hand to the earthy work of goading the chariot horses into the melee.

Bhakti, as should be clear from the foregoing exposition, is devotion to the duties of one's state from no motive of self-interest. "Self-interest" must be understood to embrace both all satisfactions in this life and all rewards after death. The pursuit of such unselfing must ever seem, to the Occidental mind, a quixotic quest. However, the bhakti doctrine is quite in accord with the (false) premises of Indian Monism. If the individual self is an illusion, then the quicker you cast off this self and all connected with it, the better. So the Upanishads had taught. So in substance Buddha had said to his disciples. Annihilation is the end of life, if one accepts the Indian theory, and Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita* is merely offering the same bitter pill dipped in a different pigment.

If bhakti have any Occidental analogue, it may be the Stoic rule of duty: "It has to be done, and it's dogged that does it." But spare us the comparison of Krishna's Rule of Works with

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[51] Lesson the Eleventh.

[52] Lesson the Eighteenth.

Christian self-devotion for the love of God. In seeking to be "perfect as his Heavenly Father is perfect," the Christian is not trying to cast off the cruel illusion of his own individual personality. Nor is he plodding on a treadmill of duty set going by some equally cruel necessity, when he walks in the path of God's commandments. He knows, instead, that God first loved him and traced the path of the commandments that he might journey safely to heaven. Both because he desires for himself the enduring bliss of the vision of God and because, loving God, he would express his love in action, does he deem duty sacred.

Quite certainly as the result of contacts with Christian doctrine, Hindu Bhaktism has been modified. Krishna "the god-man" is held up as an object of personal devotion. He is savior from difficulties, consoler in affliction. His affairs with the Gopis (shepherdesses) are pseudo-mystically interpreted as symbols of the intimate relations he will enter into with the soul which surrenders itself to him.[53]

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[53] A propaganda medium of this new Bhaktism is the Hindu magazine *Kalyan*. Since 1934 an English edition, published at Gorakhpur, has been available under the title: *The Kalyana-Kalpataru,* "A Monthly for the Propagation of Spiritual Ideas and the Love of God."

27. Bonds of Caste and Superstition

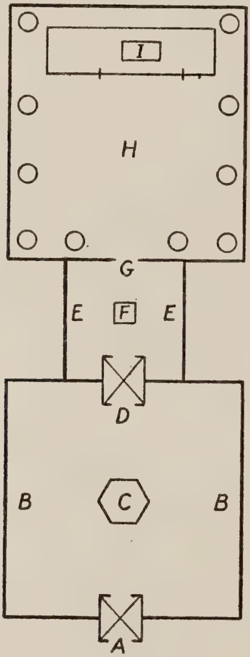
THE *Bhagavadgita's* teaching on the Supreme Reality and on the orientation of human conduct toward it became the basis of the four leading schools of Indian philosophy. Sankara (788–850) taught that God is Absolute Being, Infinite, Simple, Immutable, Self-sufficient, Conscious, and Blissful. The world and ourselves are illusions, according to the same philosopher, who offers the famous illustration of the rope and the snake in explaining his meaning. We think we see a snake (i.e., a real world and real selves), but all that is there is a rope (i.e., the One Reality God). Ramanuja (1050–1137) attributes to God Omnipotence, Omniscience, Justice, and Mercy. In his explanation, the material world, including the various bodies in which souls are imprisoned, is an evolution of God, "as the pitcher is an evolution of the clay." The soul "is a spark which issues from all eternity from the fire which is God." Because the soul tries to wrench itself away from God, it is condemned to dwell in successive material bodies (metempsychosis!) until by unselfish devotion to God it secure liberation. Vallabha (1479–1531), accepting the Emanational Pantheism of Ramanuja, magnifies Krishna as the visible manifestation of God toward whom man must turn all his thought, hope, and affection. But God, says Vallabha, has predestined that only a limited number of souls will be able to do this. These souls are the *bhaktins;* the rest (the *karmins*) have just no chance and will whirl forever on the wheel of rebirth, getting at most sensible and transitory satisfactions from material objects. Chaitanya (1485–1533), too, raises Krishna to the position of Supreme Being in a pseudo-mystical theology whose popularity in India is still waxing. Every attribute of divinity is claimed by Chaitanya for the Krishna of the myths. Krishna's bhaktin is called upon to read about him, think of him, adore him in his idolic form, but especially to cherish a crazed conviction that he (or she) is actually an actor with him in "the divine drama" of the Krishna-myths. The bhaktin may choose his (or her) own part—that of Krishna's mother, spouse, friend, or paramour.

Today there is more contact than ever before between the philosophy of India and that of the western world. Translations by Professor Max Müller and other scholars have revealed to the western student the immemorial wisdom of India's seers, while Hindu students at western universities have carried back to their homeland some of the philosophic thought of Europe and America. Unfortunately the educated Hindu fancies that the Kant-Hegel-William James tradition is the best that the west has to offer. Nor is it strange that the Idealism and Monism of this blatant and usurping tradition are hailed as akin to the Idealism and Monism which so anciently led India's thinkers astray.

Francis Xavier, Rodolph Aquaviva, and other ardent lovers of Hindu souls dreamed of an intellectual campaign against the Brahmins as a necessary part of the spiritual conquest of the land. They ambitioned to confront these leaders, so wise in their own conceits, with the splendor and reasonableness of the philosophy of the European Schoolmen. It is a dream shared by those who in our day have voluntarily exiled themselves to carry on Xavier's work. It is a dream which inspires such fine publications as *The Light of the East* and the Church's institutions for the higher education of Indian youth.

Thus far attention has been focused almost exclusively on the evolution of thought which culminates in the theory of Hinduism. The practice of Hindu religion, which will now be considered, presents a picture of rather extravagant divergence from the esoteric religious philosophy of cultured Brahmins. The psychology of the Brahmin who, as *guru* (religious sage) or as temple priest, lives on the alms of the people and encourages them in hideous superstition which he must know to be absurd, is an anomaly we do not presume to unravel. For the sixteenth century Francis Xavier and for more recent times Abbé Dubois inveigh against the Brahmins as hypocrites trafficking unashamed in the superstitious fears and hopes of a wretched population. Leaving the Brahmins to their own consciences, we shall attempt to suggest in a few brief sketches how intricately superstitious are the Hindu observances.

Temple building is a good work for which the Brahmins promise the surest divine protection here and hereafter. Hence the great cities support numerous and costly temples; no town or village is too obscure to boast at least one dwelling for the gods; while even in remote country districts the Hindu has erected a stone home for his idol, though he himself lives in a straw shed. Temple architecture has long been stereotyped (though of course the poorer temples have to dispense with some of the traditional features). A ground plan of a temple and adjacent structures is here sketched.



A is the entrance to a large open courtyard through a gate shaped like a pyramid. *B* is the courtyard in the center of which rises C, an octagonal pillar. Through *D*, a second pyramid-shaped gate, one enters *E*, another but smaller open courtyard. In the center of *E* rises a pedestal *F* supporting an idol of some minor god (for instance, the monkey-god, Hanuman). *G* is the door of the temple proper. The temple is all of stone, roofed with stone, while rows of massive pillars support the roof. *H* is the body of the temple, where the devout gather to wait until the priest opens the door of the sanctuary and exposes to their veneration the idol of the god on its pedestal *I*.

The idol, which must be of stone or metal, is worshiped because in virtue of a ceremony of consecration the god is believed to have been constrained to come and abide in it. To keep up this illusion in the people's mind is the chief care of the temple personnel. Morning and evening, when the people have assembled in the body of the temple, the priests perform, behind the closed sanctuary doors, the toilet of the god. While a tinkling bell gives notice of each step in the proceedings, the grotesque statue is bathed, clothed, and bejeweled, has painted on its forehead a sacred sign. Then offerings of food, flowers, and incense are made and the door of the sanctuary is opened to reveal to the devotees the figure of him whom they deem the controller of their destinies. Priests meanwhile go about distributing the flowers and bits of the food that has been offered, giving sips of the venerated holy water which has just been used in the divine bath.

If revenues begin to diminish, the idol will take sick and have to be taken down from his pedestal and hospitalized by solicitous Brahmins until his condition of malnutrition be corrected by an inflow of gifts from the faithful.[54] The mummery of sham oracles and staged miracles is resorted to on occasion, and in fact there is hardly a trick known to charlatanry which is not tried to keep "faith" vivid and temple finances out of the red. There is an idol in Madura, says the Abbé Dubois,[55] who is fond of field sports and who, in consequence, gratefully receives presents of footwear. After he has used a new pair of sandals on an expedition or two and scuffed and soiled them, he graciously permits the temple personnel to sell them as precious relics to the highest bidder.

Hindu worship has long since retrograded from the relatively lofty nature worship of the Vedic hymns. Now the object of worship is gross and obvious — the stone or metal idol, the cow, the snake, the monkey, the phallus or *lingam* of the Shivaists. Artisans and farmers bow down in adoration to their respective tools, soldiers to their weapons, musicians to their instruments. From this imagined ubiquity of worshipful objects has grown up a multitude of taboos, of absurd and even obscene practices. When the deadly cobra takes up residence, it may not be slain or chased away, but is fed and propitiated by sacrifices. India's high mortality from snake bite is, of course, due in large part to this insanity. Pilgrimages are made to temples consecrated to snake worship, where vast numbers of the ophidian genus grow fat under the care of Brahmin priests. Cow killing entails perpetual outcastry and, if the government police can be evaded, even death. To eat the flesh of a cow, or in fact of any larger animal, brings similar outcastry, though Hindus permit outcasts to eat meat when the animal has died of natural causes. At the Pongul (Festival of the Winter Solstice) the cattle of a district are assembled and all the men solemnly prostrate themselves. To free himself from the internal and external defilement which he is always imagining, the Hindu knows no more efficacious remedy than the excreta of cows.

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[54] Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, p. 591.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 603.

In addition to the feasts just mentioned (Gauri at the new moon in September when tools are worshiped, Nagara-panchami at the new moon in February when snakes come in for their share of adoration, Pongul at the winter solstice when cows are specially venerated), the liturgical calendar includes at least fifteen other major feasts. Among them is New Year, celebrated at the March new moon by visiting, gift-giving, feasting, and fireworks. At the beginning of October occurs what is probably the most sacred of the feasts, whose main motif seems to be a commemoration of ancestors. A good Hindu will bind himself unredeemably to the moneylender to secure means of celebrating this Dasara. For nine days sacrifices are offered to ancestors, while they are supplied with food and new clothes. Curiously caroling and prize-fighting are considered an essential part of these "All Souls' Days." For the former the schoolteacher takes the lead, training his pupils in his own original verses and leading them about to perform at the doors of citizens who may be expected to contribute largess. The rajas promote the prize fights, which the plug-uglies (men of the Jetti or athlete caste) make more satisfying to the spectators by wearing spiked gloves. A feast, finally, of mixed motif, held at the end of November, is the Deepavali. For several nights lamps are hung at house doors in honor of Agni the fire-god, while during the day sacrifices of rams or goats are offered in the fields where the precious grain is now ripening.

"As for myself," says the Abbé Dubois, "I never see a Hindu procession without being reminded of a picture of hell."[56] When the idol issues forth from his temple den, he appears unequivocally as the ruler of this darkness of Paganism. He is enthroned on a gaudy float perhaps fifty feet high, and is surrounded by his harem of temple prostitutes. Priests and other cult officials cling to the lower stages of the float, shouting encouragement to the hundreds of devotees who drag it along. A hideous orchestration on wind and wood is supplied by men of the barber class. On either side courtesans dance obscenely, men fence with sabers, wrestlers writhe in the dust, fakirs exhibit their specialty. An immense throng of men and women follow the triumphal car, enjoying by long-established custom a moratorium for the day on the observance of the laws of public decency.

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[56] *Ibid.*, p. 605.

BUDDHISM

28. Sakyamuni the Buddha

INDIA'S friends wish well to newborn India and Pakistan, while abstaining from auguries as to how satisfactorily the infants will grow up. The most sanguine imagination cannot conjure up a picture of democratic institutions flourishing where the ratio of illiteracy is so high and where the rules of caste and subcaste keep group apart from group. Legislation is all very well, but laws will not sweep away a culture pattern established for more than two thousand years, nor yet make literate the teeming millions whom the bitter struggle for mere survival has rendered apathetic to things of the mind. Using a thumb rule of predominance of population, masterminds have gerrymandered the great subcontinent into the divisions of Hindu India and Moslem Pakistan. Has this device solved the problem of the mutual and agelong antipathy of the two faiths? It is too soon to answer definitely, but the war in Kashmir and the treatment of minority groups point toward a negative answer. Finally, history records the working of a centrifugal force which has speedily shattered every structure of national unity. Scarcely five times in all has the strong hand of a conqueror held together the numerous states in the unity of an Indian empire, and each time the withdrawal of that hand has meant that the political agglomerate split up into its component elements. The normal condition of government—up to the taking over of responsibility by the British—was a multitude of small principalities under the irresponsible despotism of rajas.

Says a sympathetic critic: "It is the intense spirituality of India, and not any great political structure or social organization that it has developed, that has enabled it to resist the ravages of time and the accidents of history."[1] We may subscribe to this judgment, if we understand rightly the phrase "intense spirituality." Not our western sense of spirituality is to be understood, but that absorption in speculative thought which is expressed in the phrase "the brooding east." The ideal life in India has always been that of the philosopher spinning his web of speculation, insouciant of mundane concerns. Thus have the energies of the country's best minds been expended, while misrule, social maladjustment, and invasion held high holiday through the land. From this long labor of thought has arisen the highly complex structure known as Indian Philosophy. Very small is the portion of the structure which can be attributed to any extra-Indian influence. Characteristics are: comprehensiveness, for the sages gazed into the crystal ball of metaphysics from every conceivable angle; and subtlety, for the finer the speculative point the more were they delighted. Indian philosophy early strayed into strange paths. The search for a first principle led to the doctrine of monism, and this became the cardinal doctrine on which all speculation revolved. The inequalities of men's fortunes Indian thinkers have always explained in terms of karma and metempsychosis. That is to say, the merits or demerits in his previous existence determine man's present felicity or misery, just as his present conduct will determine his lot in his next rebirth.

Enough of this philosophy filtered down through all strata of society to produce a profound effect on national character. Karma especially, and its corollary of transmigration, are quite universal beliefs, which are the root of the Hindu's apathetic resignation to the manifold social evils of the caste system, to an economic order productive of little else than chronic poverty and national malnutrition. All these woes the Hindu regards as the working out of the evil karma accumulated in former existences. The monistic postulate, furthermore, has dimmed appreciation of the power of individual free will and taken away the edge of individual initiative. Beyond her borders, too, India has extended her influence. She has sent forth no Jinghis Khan or Tamerlane to subject the Far East, but she has indoctrinated those vast regions with important elements of her philosophy and religion. In this work of cultural infiltration missionary Buddhism has been chiefly operative.

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[1] *Indian Philosophy*, by S. Radhakrishnan (Macmillan, 1929), Vol. I, p. 25.

The career of the founder of Buddhism may be conservatively dated in the early and middle fifth century B.C., while the locale of his activities may be fairly identified as the region of the lower Jumna and middle Ganges. The India of his day, except for some Persian holdings on the northwest, was divided among a number of rajas who all liked to trace their genealogies back a thousand years to the heroes of the original Aryan invasion. We read of the rajas of Magadha, a territory centering around modern Patna; of Kosala, near Benares; of Kasi, to the south of the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna; and so of many another rajlet. In the social order the four great castes (priest, noble, merchant, farmer) had already crystallized, though the evils of the system had not yet fully developed. However, discontent with the system was germinating, and this especially in the kingdoms of Magadha, Kosala, and Kasi where Buddha preached. The Brahmin priests, who were the chief champions of rigid caste distinctions, did not enjoy here, as in regions farther to the north, an unquestioned ascendancy. A more liberal spirit prevailed, under whose influence several religious sects had broken the chains of strict Brahminism, while a free-lancing philosophy had begun brilliantly a reinterpretation of Brahminical religion and an independent quest of the truth as to the nature of man and his origin.

The Indian prince, whom more than six hundred million souls revere as the founder of their faith, was the son of the raja of Kapila, a territory lying northwest of Calcutta on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. It is not altogether clear whether a miraculous conception is asserted in the words of the biography: "On the queen descended the spirit and entered her womb." She bears the child without pain, and from the first he speaks and is filled with wisdom. Other miracles of various kinds attend his birth and early years, while prophecies are uttered about the part he will play as man's deliverer. He is named Siddhartha, though he goes more frequently by other names: *Buddha* (The Enlightened One); *Sakyamuni* (The Holy Man of the Sakya Clan), and so on. Sent to school at a tender age, he is a model of deportment, but the schooling proves love's labor lost, for the child knows all the ancient Aryan lore, speaks all languages, and is a very lion at mathematics.

His father, Suddhodana, is not wholly pleased, for he knows the prophecies that the boy "will give up his princely estate, escape from the domain of the five desires, practice austerities with resolution and diligence, and then, awakening, grasp the truth." Here is a threat to the succession of the kingdom of Kapila. With a view to falsifying his son's horoscope, Suddhodana marries him to the fair Yasodhara, and keeps the twain fast prisoners within the royal park and palace, surrounding them with every conceivable means of delight and dalliance.

> For said the king: "If he shall pass his youth
> Far from such things as move to wistfulness
> And brooding on the empty eggs of thought,
> The shadow of this fate, too vast for him,
> May fade belike, and I shall see him grow
> To that great stature of fair sovereignty
> When he shall rule all lands."[2]

Yet unseen Devas sing to the prince of the world which groans outside the palace gates for him its destined deliverer. Dreams trouble him and he starts into wakefulness with the consciousness of his mission strong upon him. He at last insists on going abroad for his first view of that world of which he has been kept in ignorance. Still to shield him, the king orders the surrounding country decked out as for a festival and all that may suggest sorrow carefully removed from the path the prince will travel. A Deva frustrates the king's purpose, for he assumes the figure of an old man with frosty poll, bent shoulders, withered body, and blear eyes. Meeting Siddhartha, he plunges the prince's mind into pensive dejection at the tableau of the misery of old age. When, on a second occasion, the prince rides forth, the Deva assumes the form of a sick man groaning, disfigured, covered with sores. On the third riding forth of the prince, his path is crossed by a funeral procession in which the persevering Deva plays the part of the corpse.

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[2] Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia,* Book the Second, 11, 240 ff. This work by an admirer of Buddhism narrates in pleasing verse the half-historical, half-legendary history of Buddha.

Not all the allurements of palace life nor all the worldly counsels of courtiers can now turn Siddhartha's mind from somber meditations. Seated beneath a gambu tree, he dejectedly sighs: "All things fall to the decay of old age, disease, and death! Alas for the world! How dark and ignorant." Now for the fourth time the Deva appears, to continue his little job of spiritual pedagogy. In the guise of a venerable hermit, he wins the prince to the resolution of fleeing from the world and embracing the eremitical life. Failing, of course, to secure the old king's permission, Siddhartha escapes by night and starts out on his travels.

He first joins a kind of open-air monastery of holy men. He rejects as vain their sacrifices and other ritualistic observances, but has a try at their asceticism. For six years on end he subsists on one hemp seed per day. At the conclusion of this fast, he endures the molestation of countless demons, but is unshaken by their terrorism and temptation. Not yet has he attained the full enlightenment he seeks, so he leaves the monastery to wander through the Ganges valley in search of a teacher. Then begins the period of his debates on the way of salvation with the most famed Brahmins and hermits, in the course of which we see developed all the Buddhistic polemic against the tenets of the national religion. His search for a teacher is fruitless, but he experiences successive interior illuminations through which he grows in detachment from all worldly desires and in sympathy for his fellow men. At last, on the red letter night of Buddhist annals, he receives beneath the sacred Bodh-tree near Benares the plenitude of enlightenment and dedicates himself to preach to men the way of deliverance from misery.

He tours all the Indian kingdoms, making disciples and working prodigies. He broadcasts his doctrine with a beatific assurance of its truth and comprehensiveness which is proof against all contradiction. Spiteful Brahmins heckle him, but he meets sophism with sophism in a truly amazing display of Indian dialectical skill. The demons set a wild elephant on him, whom the prophet cures of his predominant passion for strong drink and converts to the Buddhist law. Revisiting Kapila, he converts his own people, reconciles his family to his wandering vocation, and transforms the old king himself into a contemplative recluse. So great spiritual power is Sakyamuni's that he can determine the span of his own life, and this he does. When the day he has appointed arrives, he addresses a last discourse to a vast crowd of his followers and then relinquishes his soul to Nirvana. His body they burn and preserve the bones in a golden vase at the top of a tower.

The above biography has been detailed without comment. It is a summary of the standard life of Buddha, written originally in Sanskrit by the Buddhist Asvaghosa. The latter lived in India during the first century of our era, and gathered from all parts of the country the traditions about Buddha which had survived. An interval, therefore, of approximately six hundred years separates the lifetime of the prophet from the date when his biography was committed to writing. How splendid a setting these six hundred years afford for the growth of myths and for the obscuration of the true picture of the prophet, it is scarcely necessary to remark. The miracles Asvaghosa narrates have no claim to historicity, being the product of the same oriental imagination which has given us *The Thousand and One Nights*. Of the external events of Siddhartha's life the cautious historian will accept his birth in a noble (scarcely a royal) family; his turning away from worldly advantages to seek the things of the spirit and to help his fellow men; his typically Indian progress in the paths of asceticism and contemplation; his preaching and establishment of a religious society. Substantially historical, doubtless, is the account of the evolution of his mind, though comparison shows clearly that he borrowed very much from the Upanishads (an extensive literature of Indian philosophico-religious speculation). This comparison makes quite untenable the claim that his doctrine was preternaturally inspired.

Suddhodana's opposition to his son Siddhartha's vocation is a story that has curiously migrated into Christian hagiography in the form of the Barlaam and Josaphat legend. Josaphat (which name itself is probably a corrupted form of Bodhisattva or Buddha) was, according to the legend, the son of an Indian king, Abbener. The king was persecuting the Christian community founded by the apostle St. Thomas. Astrologers had prophesied that Josaphat would become a Christian; to prevent which fate the king shut his son up within the palace. Barlaam a monk (who supplies the place of the persistent Deva of the Buddha story) eluded royal vigilance and converted Josaphat to the faith. After trying in vain all stratagems to shake his son's constancy, Abbener himself accepted

Christianity, abdicated the throne, and turned hermit. Josaphat carried on for a time as king, then fled to the desert to finish his days with his teacher Barlaam in monastic solitude.[3]

Dependence on the Buddha story can hardly be doubted here in view of much detailed similarity. Apart from this bit of pious romancing, there is just no proof that Christianity owes anything to Buddhism, assertions to the contrary being nothing more than symptoms of the parallelitis which afflicts a certain type of historian of religion. In particular, every sound historical criterion cries down the assertion that the canonical Gospels borrowed from the Buddha legend. First, the Mediterranean world of the first century A.D. was as ignorant of Buddhism and its founder as the Andaman Islands today are of Christian Science and Mrs. Eddy. Resemblances between Asvaghosa's account and the canonical Gospels prove merely that Indian storytellers had woven on the theme of a heaven-sent teacher the decorative motifs which naturally suggested themselves.[4] The resemblances reduce to the following. A miraculous conception (if indeed this be the sense of Asvaghosa's text) is asserted for Siddhartha. At his birth, says Asvaghosa, "the Devas in space raised their responsive harmonies of heavenly song." An ascetic named Asita inspected the babe and recognized the portents of his predestination — the weblike filament between his fingers, the thousand-rayed wheel on the soles of his feet, the white woollike prominence between his eyes. Asita then prophesied the child's future renunciation of kingship, his asceticism, his enlightenment, and his preaching for the salvation of the world. Asvaghosa later tells how Mara the king of the demons tempts Siddhartha just when he is about to begin his preaching, trying successively to move him to discouragement, lust, terror. But why pursue further the bootless quest of parallels to the events of Gospel history? It is pure unreason to read the details of the Buddha story as models used by the Evangelists.

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[3] A monk of the monastery of St. Sabas near Jerusalem first wrote down the Barlaam-Josaphat legend in the seventh century A.D. According to Butler's *Lives of the Saints* (Thurston-Attwater, rev. ed., Vol. XI), the legend and the actors in it are alike wholly unhistorical.

[4] Indian influence on the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas is maintained by some scholars with a fair degree of probability.

29. Sources of Buddha's Thought

BUDDHISTS insist on the originality of their founder's doctrine, denying that he owed anything of importance to the long line of Indian sages who preceded him. This partisan judgment does not square with the facts, which reveal him in multiple debt to his country's philosophical and religious past. In the annals of India's higher thought—through which we have labored in previous chapters—we can trace the foundations on which the Buddha built, and even identify specific doctrines which are the very pillars of his teaching.

With the Upanishads he taught that both external objects and the thinking subject are unreal; that belief in their reality is merely ignorance and illusion. The *Buddhacarita* (Asvaghosa's Life of Buddha) is a Pilgrim's Progress, which follows the hero through adventures of the mind from his first discovery of the hollowness of life to Objective Idealism; thence to Subjective Idealism; finally to the Nihilism of the denial of all reality whatsoever. In the Dialogues Buddha narrates how he practiced breath control, fasted, and persevered in meditation until he grubbed out by the roots the illusion of the reality of external objects. External objects, he taught, are Life's Stuff spawned by desire, imagination, and ignorance.

> Life's Stuff breeds every ill,
> breeds all the ills there are.
> The dolt who witlessly
> creates this stuff, piles ill
> on ill. Create it not,
> since thence all ills are born.
>
> 'Tis ignorance entails the dreary round—
> now here, now there—of countless births and deaths.
> 'Tis ignorance tricks the purblind dolt to trudge
> th' inexorable round from life to life.[5]

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[5] *Buddha's Teachings* in Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 37, p. 175.

Once illusionism is invoked to explain away what one perceives, the perceiver himself retains but a tenuous hold on reality. Buddha, no less than the Upanishads, therefore easily dismissed consciousness of selfhood as fallacious report. Strong utterances are the following:

> And what of this short-lived body, bred of cravings?
> No "I" is here; no "mine"; no "I am"; nothing at all.[6]

> Visible shape is impermanent; feeling is impermanent; perception is impermanent; the plastic forces are impermanent; consciousness is impermanent. There is no soul in visible shapes, feelings, perceptions, plastic forces or consciousness.[7]

> Again, in the wilds or at the foot of a tree, the disciple of the Noble (Buddha) reflects that all this (all sensible impressions) is devoid of a self or anything like a self.[8]

After the oriental manner, metaphors abound illustrative of this doctrine. Thus the "I" is likened to an ape grasping branch after branch as it swings along through the forest; to the chariot wheel never in contact with the ground for more than a moment at any one point of its rim; to the flame whose light and heat are different each succeeding second; to a river in constant flux. All these comparisons enforce the single argument: The so-called "I" appears only in a series of constantly changing impressions: e.g., I feel warm, I am angry, I assent to a proposition. But to say that a thing so transient is a permanent personality is absurd. Therefore the "I" or personality does not exist.

Buddha never sought for himself, nor taught others, the possibility of absorption in the Brahma-Atman of the Upanishads. We will see later that his whole attitude toward such high speculations as Monism was insouciant and agnostic. What he taught was "the path," a way of conquering desire for anything here or hereafter. His goal was the negative one of complete mental catharsis, consisting in the conviction that everything is illusory and unreal. Where in his system he left room for the supremely Real and Permanent Brahma-Atman it is impossible to see.

Very early the doctrine of karma (and its corollary, metempsychosis), like a baleful mortmain, grasped and choked the Indian spirit. The good or evil which a man did was thought neither to die with him nor to meet proper reward or punishment in another world, but to bring him back to this world in a happier or less happy condition. In this endless process, for endless it was thought to be, it was theoretically possible for good karma to accumulate and to secure rebirth in a highly satisfactory situation. But emphasis in practice was laid on the sinister aspects. Karma was regarded as an inherited taint and an ungrateful portent overshadowing the future ages of one's reincarnations. This curious belief the Upanishads defined as a dogma, meticulously explaining all its somber implications. We can judge from Buddha's disputations and popular sermons that philosophers and common men alike of his day believed unquestioningly in karma. His own acceptance of it is likewise unquestioning. There is no record that he appealed to Upanishadic authority as a proof of this (or, in fact, of any other) point of his teaching. Perhaps the very currency of belief in karma made such an appeal superfluous; perhaps the chroniclers of his life deemed any admission of borrowed doctrines inconsistent with the repute of his plenary inspiration. At any rate, sufficient detailed similarity can be shown to justify the assertion that Buddha's karma teaching is based on the Upanishads. For a simple statement of the essence of karma—namely, that a man's condition in his reincarnation depends upon his observance or nonobservance of morality—we may turn to the so-called *Saleyaka-sutta.* Brahmin householders put a question to Buddha.

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[6] *Dialogues of the Buddha* in Sacred Books of the East Series, Vol. V, p. 134.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 165.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

> Why and wherefore is it that, after death at the body's dissolution, some creatures come to rebirth in states of suffering or woe or purgatory, while others are reborn in some happy state or heaven? Because, householders (Buddha replies), they walk not in righteousness but in wickedness, some creatures pass to states of suffering; others, because they walk in righteousness and in goodness, are reborn in happy states and in heaven.[9]

There follows a clarification, rather too prolix to admit quotation, of the meaning of righteousness in thought, word, and deed.

Indian philosophy rather avoids establishing a mathematical equality between merit and felicity (or between demerit and misery) in future reincarnation. Buddha seems to have had some such equality in mind. It is implied in his teaching on "the four kinds of action," which he explains to two ascetics in the Dialogues. One of these two worthies had made a vow to live after the manner of dogs; the other, after the manner of kine. They are in despair when Buddha tells them that all their austerities will not secure the longed-for deliverance from reincarnation. He then expounds for them the mystery of the "four kinds of action."

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[9] *Sacred Books of the Buddhists* (S.B.E. Series), Vol. V, pp. 202, 203.

> I affirm four kinds of action which I have independently discovered and proved. What are the four? There are actions which are black with black outcome. There are actions which are bright with bright outcome. There are actions which are both black and bright with both a black and a bright outcome. There are finally actions which are neither black nor bright with an outcome neither black nor bright, and which conduce to the destruction of *karma.*[10]

In the exposition which he then gives, he says that a man by his actions evolves "complexes" (*sankharas*) of body, speech, and thought which are "harmful, harmless, or both harmful and harmless." The respective complexes become immediately operative when reincarnation ensues, when the man will find his new life happy or unhappy or else a mosaic of joy and pain. The fourth alternative is that secured by the Almsman (Buddhist monk), who in life frees himself from all desires, who is wholly enlightened, who has rent the web of karma, who will not be reborn.

> In this case it is the mental resolve to discard all actions of the three foregoing types. This is called action which is neither black nor bright, and which conduces to the destruction of *karma.*[11]

Recognizably Upanishadic in its source is the above teaching on the "way out" for karma-ridden man. So long as ignorance of the goal, the delusion of individual selfhood, and appetite for sense impressions dominate him, he will wander in the labyrinth of karma and rebirth. Through the ninety-one aeons which his memory recalled, Buddha knew neither layman nor monk who, remaining so enmeshed, had managed to make an end of the evil rebirth. Deliverance, however, is possible for him who seeks with

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 280.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

steadfast heart and single eye to rid himself of desire. Buddha reproved the curiosity of certain Almsmen anent their experiences in previous incarnations and their lot in future reincarnations, for such speculations only distracted the mind from the pursuit of enlightenment and deliverance. But this attitude of his leads us into the subject matter of the next chapter.

30. The Path to Nirvana

WERE the India of the fifth century B.C. better known, especially in its political and economic aspects, Buddha's rise and success would be capable of more coherent explanation. The reason why a teaching which describes human life as unalloyed misery won general approval can only be that the population was in fact intensely depressed. One may interestingly conjecture that the shackles of the caste system were galling the poor Indian, that the rajas after their fashion were impoverishing the country by futile wars, that both rajas and Brahmins were thumbscrewing the laboring classes for the tithes sanctioned by Vedic tradition. The people, one may conjecture, felt that the formulas for happiness prescribed by their Brahmin spiritual fathers did not work. In Buddha's jeremiads, however, they recognized a true echo of their own pessimistic views of life. His sympathy, moreover, warmed them, while his law of universal kindness promised something in the nature of a constructive social force. The final goal he showed them was not the happiness of heaven, but was at least a final cessation of woe.

Though a noble by caste and though well versed in the learning of the Brahmins, he was close to the people through sympathy. Even their Pali language he used and enjoined on his disciples in preference to Sanskrit which had hitherto been the language of religion and philosophy. He was not a social revolutionist in a demagogic sense. We read, for instance, that he forbade any great number to break necessary worldly ties in favor of the monastic life; that he would not accept soldiers, whose allegiance was pledged to their kings, as monks. It was against the abuses of Brahminism that he inveighed as the common man's champion. For the Brahmins the caste system was a bulwark of privilege; for them, too, sacrifices according to the prescriptions of the

Brahmanas were an abundant source of income. Buddha saw that the caste system, though as yet inchoate, was capable of developing into a system of religious and social oppression. He was not sighing for a return to the more democratic institutions which in India had preceded the rise of larger and more closely organized states; much less was he dreaming of a government of free citizens such as was emerging in his day in distant Hellas. He seems to have regarded the social structure of his country as just and normal. What he would not brook was that caste be a handicap for anyone in sharing fully in the religious and ethical fruits of his teaching. Remarks Professor Oldenberg: "The religious garb of Buddha's disciples makes lords and commons, Brahmins and Cudras equal. The gospel of deliverance is not confined to the high-born alone."[12] He is speaking here of *bhikshus* or monks, but a few pages further on he shows that there was a like freedom for men of all castes to become *upasakas* or lay Buddhists.

Buddha loathed the shams of the sacrificial system which enriched the Brahmin priests and which presumptuously professed to bind the will of the gods to human purposes. Asked what were the essentials of sacrifice, he told the story of a king who, before offering sacrifice, righted all wrongs in his kingdom, and then merely offered in sacrifice libations of milk, oil, and honey. Seeming thus to tolerate some form of unbloody sacrifice, he then goes on to explain four better "sacrifices," all four of them stages on the path of Buddhist perfection. Better than to offer libations is it to show oneself a generous patron of the bhikshus. Better still: enroll yourself as an upasaka. More perfect yet is the sacrifice of the bhikshu when he separates his mind and affections from joy and sorrow. The highest sacrifice is continually offered by the *arhat* who has broken all fetters, conquered all illusions, and waits tranquilly for his dissolution into nirvana.

In minimizing the importance of caste and sacrifice, Buddha was pricking the Brahmin priests in the region of their tenderest prejudices, so that the biography of Asvaghosa preserves the record of constant controversies with them as Buddha went preaching along the lower Jumna and middle Ganges. It was a region of secondary or derivative Aryan culture, a region where free-lancing philosophy was emancipated from the control of Brahmin sacerdotalism, a region where the predominating influence was that of the Ksatriyas or noble caste.[13] Here under noble patronage not only had the Upanishad movement prospered, but jealous Brahmin orthodoxy was affronted by the presence of organized sects and numerous independent ascetics. Toward all this stirring of ideas Siddhartha opened his mind. He underwent a process of education, a clarification of his own goal, and a precisioning of means toward its attainment. Though he could not embrace wholeheartedly any single doctrine or discipline which he contacted, since they all seemed ultimately inadequate, he yet chose what he thought true and conducive to the purpose he had in view. In particular, as has been seen in the preceding chapter, he followed contemporary sages very far in their analyses of the causes of suffering and in the mental catharses which they prescribed to obtain release. Even the "enlightenment" which flashed upon him beneath the Bodh tree must appear to a calm critic rather as a culmination of his education than as a wholly original inspiration. By it the fragmentary truths which he had discovered during his quest clicked together into a synthesis seemingly coherent and satisfactory.

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[12] *Buddha*, by H. Oldenberg, transl. by W. Hoey (London: William & Norgate, 1882), p. 153.

With a description of the "enlightenment" we may well begin the discussion of Buddha's own doctrine. He first makes his famous vow of immobility.

> On this with his resolution for sole companion, he made up his mind for enlightenment and proceeded to the root of a pipal tree, where the ground was carpeted with green grass. . . . He took grass from a grass-cutter and, betaking himself to the great, pure tree, he made a vow for enlightenment and seated himself. Then he took up the supreme, immovable, cross-legged posture with his limbs massed together like the coils of a sleeping serpent, saying: "I will not rise from this position till I achieve the completion of my task."[14]

This picture of him in the Lotus Posture became the commonest motif of later Buddhist art. In vain did Mara the tempter deploy legions of alluring and terrifying shapes about the tree. Siddhartha stirred not until in the depth of the night full enlightenment burst upon him.

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[13] The stronghold of Brahminism at the time was the Punjab and northward. The Brahmin priests had not succeeded in maintaining such absolute control over the adventurous Aryan princes and people who had pushed southward and established themselves along the Ganges and its tributaries.

[14] *The Buddhacarita,* transl. by E. H. Johnston, Canto XII, vv. 115, 119, 120.

> Then the Blessed One, during the first watch of the night, fixed his mind upon the chain of causation. "From ignorance springs consciousness. From consciousness springs a belief in individual personality. From personality spring the senses. In the senses arise the impressions of their proper objects. Then come desire and attachment. Desire and attachment to sensible objects cause clinging to life, produce in turn old age, death, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. Destroy, therefore, ignorance, and consciousness together with the belief in individual personality is destroyed. Destroy desire and attachment with their clinging to life, and you have destroyed suffering, old age, death and all the rest. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering."[15]

Previous "revelations" had led Siddhartha to reject the Jaina belief in the reality of the individual Ego and to accept the Upanishad dogma that consciousness is at fault in reporting individual existence. This is the meaning of the first statement made by Buddha in the above excerpt. What follows in regard to desire as the cause of human suffering is akin to Upanishadic teaching and quite the same as the teaching of Mahavira, the prophet of the Jainas. The revelation under the pipal tree, then, stems definitely from another tree; it is a branch springing naturally from the old tree of Indo-Aryan philosophy.

The evangel which Buddha began to spread through the Ganges valley after his enlightenment may, for the sake of order, be reduced to teaching on

1. the nature of ultimate reality;
2. the means of conquering ignorance and desire;
3. Nirvana or the final goal.

Greek Heraclitus fathered the phrase: *panta rei* ("nowhere is there anything that endures"). Buddhism has a like doctrine of the impermanence of everything in the world. It is fond of comparing the external world to a river's restless flow. The conscious Ego is still more impermanent, for it is merely the candle's flame which every instant is a new flame. The candle is first lit by ignorance and illusion, is kept burning by desire. We may well follow S. Radhakrishnan in saying that Buddha's genuine doctrine implies that external phenomena are transitory, while the phenomena of consciousness are only momentary. To see here, as some authors do, a pre-Christian anticipation of Bergson's Creative Evolution, is to implement Buddha's thought with a "scientific" apparatus which certainly never occurred to him. Bergson's philosophical insanity is of a more subtle type and buttressed with ingenious reasoning, while Siddhartha merely borrows his ideas on impermanence from the Upanishads and defends them by the *ipse dixit* argument or by rather puerile metaphors.[16]

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[15] *Ibid.,* Canto XIV, vv. 80 sqq.

Phenomena, whether internal or external, present themselves as ordered series. The fact of the order Buddha notes and records rather redundantly as follows:

If that is, this comes about;
The rise of that makes this arise;
If that is not, this comes not about;
The ceasing of that makes this cease.[17]

Offering no explanation for the succession of one member after another in this parade of phenomena, he cannot be credited with a true concept of causality, much less with discovering the principle of causality. He taught, at best, a form of occasionalism, which of course explains not at all the ordered series of phenomena.

Is there, back of all the flux of external phenomena and conscious experiences, any Permanent, whether originating and sustaining God or permeating World Soul? The Brahma-Atman was the answer of the Upanishads. One famous text is attributed to Buddha which seems to commit him to an Ultimate Real:

> There is an unborn, an unoriginated, an unmade, an uncompounded. Were there not, O mendicants, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the originated, the made and the compounded.[18]

Yet elsewhere he never discusses this Unoriginated, never delimits its attributes, never specifies its relations to the phenomenal world.

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[16] Cf. Steward E. Dollard's "Summary of Bergsonism" in *The Modern Schoolman,* Vol. XX, No. I.

[17] *Sacred Books of the Buddhists,* Vol. VI, p. 17.

[18] *Udana Sutta,* in S.B.E. Series, VIII, 3.

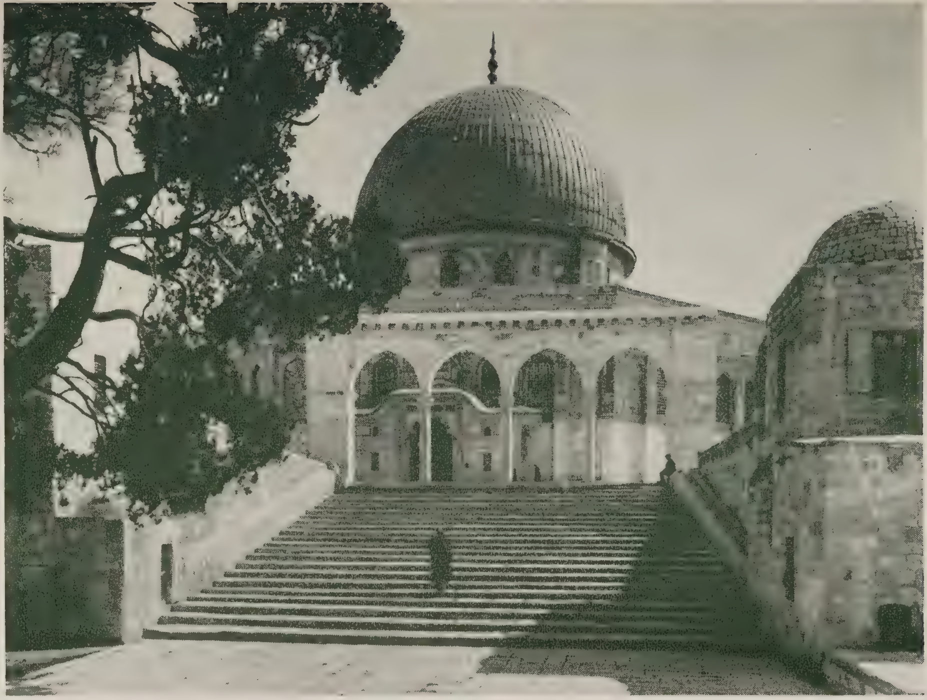

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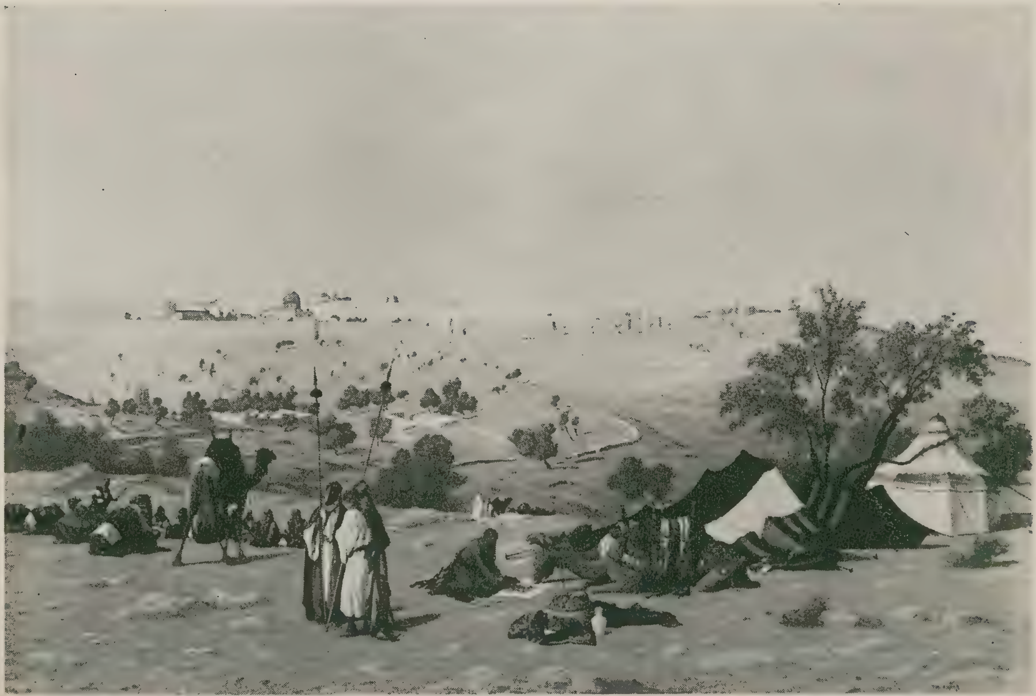
Fig. 18. DOME OF THE ROCK IN JERUSALEM. Popularly known as the Mosque of Omar. Mohammed claimed to be a prophet sent to complete the Jewish and Christian revelations. Hence for Moslems Jerusalem is a holy city second only to Mecca. Symbol of this belief is this splendid mosque built on the site of the Temple.



METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Fig. 19. ARABS NEAR THE WALLS OF CAIRO. The *Koran* raised the Arabs from crude paganism to a higher religious and cultural level. For thirteen centuries their steadfastness in Islamic beliefs has been remarkable. On the other hand, Islam has been for the same period a major obstacle to the spread of Christianity in the East.

The Upanishads, it will be remembered, are prolix to the point of weariness in their explanations of Brahma-Atman. Strange, surely, then, is Buddha's silence if he did hold an Ultimate Reality. Furthermore, an ultimate reality is as unnecessary to his whole thought as Brahma-Atman is necessary to the whole thought of the Upanishads. Release was his constant goal, and toward this release he offered as means the most complete mental catharsis of belief in any reality. Buddha's enthusiasm was reserved for nirvana and, though it is always risky to argue from etymology, this word (*vah-nir*) means "a blowing out." Nor does he add to this purely negative sense any qualification that would lead us to suspect that nirvana includes a sharing or absorption in a Supremely Real Good.

That the founder of so great a religious movement taught nihilism may seem to tax credulity. However, in the Buddhist apostolate the point was never stressed. Buddhist "schoolmen" of the four great schools struggled with the problem, one of the four schools finally (the Madhyamika) becoming eagerly nihilistic in its teaching. After all, is theoretic nihilism so strange in the intellectual atmosphere of "the brooding east"? It is a hard saying, of course, to admirers of Buddhism, hence one reads earnest vindications, for instance by Mrs. Rhys Davids and S. Radhakrishnan,[19] of the Buddha as a philosophic realist and a theist in religion.

Unreal, then, are the world, the self, even the Ultimate. Illusion tyrannizes over us and our only way to freedom is through conquest of illusion. The Upanishads had taught the same, but what they emphasized was the need for casting out *ignorance* through knowledge of the Atman. To Buddha it seemed that illusion drew its vitality rather from *desire,* hence that the mind's strategy must be directed toward the rooting out of desire. In other words, I am constantly seeking some goods for my (imagined) individual self —goods such as carnal delights, material possessions, station. To coddle this same self I seek favors of the gods by means of prayer and sacrifice. I behave with an eye on the reward that self will get in heaven, abstain from sin, and practice asceticism in the hope of escaping scourging in hell. "All futile," pontificates the Enlightened One; "sickness, old age and the funeral-pyre separate you from all that you cherish in this life. Passing on, you may collect your reward or be flailed for your transgressions, but in any case you will eventually be reborn into this world. Such is the wheel of life to which your desires bind you in torment."

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[19] *What was the Original Gospel in Buddhism?,* Chapter 3, Epworth Press, London, 1938; *Indian Philosophy,* Vol. I, p. 382 sqq.

Buddha, logically enough, goes on to offer a technique for effecting an euthanasia of desire. The treatment begins by innoculating the patient's mind with the Four Noble Truths. We take the liberty to use Sir Edwin Arnold's graceful verses, which faithfully reproduce the thought of Buddha's rather involved and cumbersome text.

The first truth is of sorrow. Be not mocked!
  Life which ye prize is long-drawn agony:
Only its pains abide; its pleasures are
  As birds which light and fly.

The second truth is sorrow's cause. What grief
  Springs of itself and springs not of desire?
Senses and things perceived mingle and light
  Passion's quick spark of fire.

The third is sorrow's ceasing. This is peace
  To conquer love of self and lust of life,
To tear deep-rooted passion from the breast,
  To still the inward strife.

The fourth truth is The Way, It openeth wide,
  Plain for all feet to tread, easy and near,
The Noble Eightfold Path; it goeth straight
  To peace and refuge. Hear![20]

The first three of these truths are premises which the disciple must believe. The fourth calls for action, for under the names of the Way, the Path, the Eightfold Path Buddha comprehended the distinctive yoga of his sect.[21] It is a yoga chiefly of spiritual exercises, though as aids to mental concentration he recommends practices of fasting, bodily posture, and breath control. The stages on the Eightfold Path may be thus outlined:

[20] *The Light of Asia,* Book the Eighth, pp. 223–226.

[21] Farther back in Indian history than scholars are able to say, arose the conviction that higher knowledge was attainable through peculiar forms of corporal and spiritual discipline. The Upanishads, with their rules for bodily control and mental concentration, greatly furthered this conviction, so that at the period of Buddhist origins all sects were practicing yoga. Buddha's own experience of the harmful effects of excessive asceticism led him to subordinate merely physical yoga to mental exercises.

1. Regulate bodily cravings by right reason.	*Purgative Way*
2. Think good, especially kind, thoughts.	
3. Bridle the tongue.	
4. Practice active virtues, especially benevolence.	
5. Intensify practice of the preceding four.	
6. Cast out fear and desire by persevering meditation on the unreality of all those objects that stir you to fear and desire.	*Illuminative Way*
7. By meditation on the impermanence and momentariness of conscious experiences, convince yourself that your own individual personality is an illusion.	
8. The illusion of life has passed away, the candle has been snuffed out, Nirvana has ensued.	*Unitive* (?) *Way*

Compunction — the realization of life's vanities and miseries — is clearly the first disposition which Buddha sought to arouse. Though sound sense reproves the too great pessimism of his outlook, still compunction is an essential part of spirituality. Further admirable elements of truth are noted in the first five stages of the Path, which incorporate the Buddha's ethical code. This code, on which Buddha much insisted in his preaching, anathematizes murder, theft, and adultery; lying, slander, and abuse of others; covetousness and hatred. Positively it commands respect for age and authority, benevolence, and sympathy.

In the religion of the Vedas life's goal was a Valhalla of material satisfactions, against which was set a shadowy region of torments for those who had displeased the gods. As India's faith expanded to include the doctrines of karma and transmigration of souls, this "heaven and hell" were retained in popular belief, but as temporary abodes whence the soul would ultimately pass to rebirth on earth. Upanishad thinking offered a new "heaven" of absorption in the glorious Brahma-Atman. It is quite certain that popular religion never accepted the full implication of the Brahma-Atman, for to tell me that my individual conscious ego will be absorbed in even so glorious a Being is to set before me a Barmecide feast. Nor, we may say with equal certainty, have the millions who acknowledge Sakyamuni as the founder of their faith directed their religious efforts toward a nirvana in which self will be snuffed out. It is important to bear this in mind when considering, as we now shall, Buddha's own teaching on nirvana.

The word itself means "blowing out," probably indicating the extinction of the flame of illusion and desire. When a man has reached Stage 7 on the spiritual mountain (cf. above), he possesses *Bodhi* (enlightenment), is an *arhat* (perfected soul), and simply waits for "the change that has no changing." Such Buddha himself became in his thirty-first year; such he remained during the forty years of preaching which followed. Of this *earthly nirvana* the first-rate authority L. de la Vallee Poussin writes.

> Much stress has been laid on this conception of an earthly nirvana by several writers, among whom is Rhys Davids; and rightly so. On the one hand, deliverance from desire is the cause and the token of deliverance from existence. On the other hand, India has always been full of reverence for the saints who have reached a thorough ataraxia and become insensible to pleasure, suffering and hope. "I do not wish for death; I do not wish for life." Neophytes longed for that professional perfection, a sublime pattern of which was given by Sakyamuni; and it can be maintained that many monks dreamed only of the earthly nirvana, without taking trouble about final nirvana. They thought only of attaining the happiness and detachment of nirvana in this life.[22]

The jolly monk is a figure that always greets the visitor to the Buddhist hall of museums with his rotund figure and smile-wreathed face. He bubbles over with contentment, no matter what difficult circumstances the artist may have created for him. Perhaps in him, as well as in the utter serenity of the common Buddha figure, intuitive art has really captured the spirit of Buddha, defined his ultimate dogma: "there is nothing better, nothing beyond the ceasing of earthly care; this is the whole of the goal."

But now what happens when our jolly monk's smile is frozen in death? De la Vallee Poussin's answer is so clear that it would be futile to attempt improving on it.

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[22] Hastings, *Encycl. of Religion and Ethics,* Vol. IX, p. 378.

> We have here in view the whole fabric of the speculative texts, the texts which force upon us the identification of deliverance with annihilation, because they do not leave room for any other surmise. These texts are very numerous and free from any loophole for doubt. They provide us with a scientific description of man, and teach that there is nothing permanent in him. As a matter of fact there is no "man" or "being," "soul" or "person"; such expressions are mere names for a complex of elements, some corporeal, some spiritual, which are dissolved at death. If the causes — actions to be rewarded in some other life (viz., *karma*) — that give to the dying consciousness the power of creating in some embryo a new consciousness that continues the first one and enjoys the fruits of previous lives, there is no cessation of existence, there is no annihilation. If, however, these causes are wanting — and they are wanting in the case of a saint who has destroyed desire and burned act — the consciousness is blown out as the flame of a lamp, *and that is nirvana,* i.e., the end of life, of consciousness and of suffering. All the mystic and psychological data — all idea of a transcendent self, of an immanent absolute — that could give any support to a conception of survival of whatever kind, personal or impersonal, have been sedulously destroyed by Buddhist philosophy.[23]

This is the logic of the matter, whatever one's sympathy and admiration for Buddhism may urge one to fancy. Nirvana is the void of annihilation, "the second death" in a sense of utter cessation and not life eternal.

Buddha's keener converts urged upon him this ungrateful conclusion from the premises he had taught so unequivocally. He should have spoken out and admitted the equation of "nirvana = annihilation," however distasteful the confession might have been. Instead, he squirmed, evidenced a bit of unsaintly impatience, and took refuge in a prohibition against discussion of such questions. They were "the thicket of theorizing,"[24] "soul-theories" to be abhorred by a pious monk.[25] Monks who speculate on such questions are like incautious deer who rush into the snare laid by the hunter.[26] To the reverend Malunkya-putta came the thought:

> The Lord (Buddha, whose disciple he was) does not expound to

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[23] *Ibid.,* p. 377.
[24] *Dialogues of the Buddha* (S.B.E. Series), Vol. V, p. 333.
[25] *Ibid.,* p. 44.
[26] *Ibid.,* p. 111.

> me the views: The world is eternal – the world is not eternal; The world is finite – the world is infinite; Life and the body are one – life and the body are distinct entities; A truthfinder passes to another existence after death – a truthfinder passes to no further existence after death. . . . I do not like his not expounding these things to me; I resent it; I will go to him and question him thereon.[27]

When the dissatisfied disciple taxed the master on these points, he was told that in their contract of master-discipleship there was no stipulation as to enlightenment on such abstract matters. Buddha continued:

> If, Malunkya-putta, a man were to say that he would not follow the higher life under the Lord until the Lord had answered all the questions you enumerate, he would get no answer from the Truthfinder till death overtook him. It is just as if a man were transfixed by an arrow heavily coated with poison, and his friends and kinsfolk were to get him a leech expert in dealing with arrow-wounds, but the man would not have the arrow taken out until he knew whether the archer who had shot him was a brahmin or a noble or a middle-class man or a peasant (and so on as to the archer's appearance, home, the construction of his weapons). . . . The higher life is not contingent on any thesis that the world is or is not eternal. In either case, as in each of the other theses you adduce, there still abides the fact of birth, decay and death; there still abides the fact of grief and tribulation, of ill, sorrow and distraction; of all of which I proclaim the extirpation here and now. What have I left untaught? I have not taught any of the propositions which you, Malunkya-putta, enumerate. And why? Because they are unprofitable and not fundamental to the higher life. What have I specifically taught? I have taught of ill, of its origin, of its cessation, and of the Path that leads to its cessation. And why have I taught this? Because this is profitable and fundamental to the higher life.[28]

Buddha established no authoritative teaching body; he did not even consign his doctrine to writing, but left everything to the memory of his disciples. Buddhist tradition says that "shortly after the lamp of wisdom had been blown out by the wind of impermanence," Ananda, Upali, Kasyapa, and others who had heard "the Lord" assembled at the Rajagrha monastery near Magadha and recited from memory what he had taught on doctrine, morals, and discipline. A hundred years later, tradition again affirms, a second council assembled at Vaisali (to the east of modern Patna). The traditions are unsupported by other evidence. The Buddhist Constantine, Asoka (274–232 roughly), is said to have convened a third council at his capital, Patna, but that pious monarch does not mention the fact in his copious inscriptions. A fourth council (the only one certainly historical) met under the presidency of Asvaghosa at Srinagar in Kashmir during the first decade of our own era. The Buddhist holy books date no farther back than 80 B.C., when the Pali Canon was written in Ceylon.

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[27] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 305–307.

The facts just sketched indicate how inadequate was the provision for preserving the unity of the faith. It is not surprising that Buddhism early experienced internal division and did not offer that united front which is the best preparedness for meeting opposition. Sharpest cleavage resulted from the emphasis placed respectively by two schools of monks on certain facets of Sakyamuni's spirit. Hinayanists, fastening upon his conviction of the transitoriness of all things and upon his world-weariness, made escape from the misery of existence the goal. They were egocentrics who sought by contemplation and renunciation a speedy release from the torture wheel. Warmth, love, and activity were meaningless words in their philosophy of religion. Though their schools were brought, probably due to scholastic controversy with other schools, to the admission of a creator god and subordinate deities, the doctrine remained sterile and never produced the fruit of personal relations between man and god. Buddha himself had for the strict Hinayanist only the value of an exemplar, for he merely showed how man through his own efforts must attain to that ataraxia which is the cessation of woe and of existence. The *Hinayana* (the word means "Little Vehicle") was thus untrue to Buddha, at least in its cold self-centerment and want of human sympathy. It reminds us not a little of the aloofness of the Upanishads. Needless to say, the history of Hinayana was foredoomed to be the history of recluses cloistered away from the interests and needs of the multitude. However, the Hinayanists who established themselves in Ceylon and Burma, needing state support and aspiring to the status of a national religion, compromised their principles at least as far as popular practices of devotion were concerned. The external trappings of a polytheistic worship — temples, images, processions, relics, music — are all attested for Ceylon and Burma. Hindu gods were taken into the cult, though Buddha himself was elevated to the rank of *devitideva* or superior god and his supposed relics received an extravagant cult. Living arhats — who seem to have been conveniently numerous — were the objects of religious veneration, and their obsequies were celebrated with the greatest magnificence.

The *Mahayana* ("Great Vehicle") saw Buddha as helper and rescuer of the distressed multitude, without at the same time rejecting his doctrine of transitoriness and his call to renunciation.[29] The Hinayanist arhat, a saint for himself but useless to others, was of course no appealing ideal to the common people, who probably suspected the genuineness of such self-centered virtue. Perhaps, too, Nirvana needed a reinterpretation before it could have a wide appeal as the goal of life. At any rate, the apostles of northern India transformed both the arhat ideal and the concept of nirvana, and called their transformation the "Great Vehicle." The term connotes salvation offered to all on easy terms.

The Buddhology of the Mahayana made of the Indian noble Siddhartha a being dwelling eternally in the empyrean, who simply manifested himself in Siddhartha through a compassionate desire to enlighten men. From his empyrean dwelling he now, with ever increasing enlightenment, irradiates the countless "heavens" (so-called Buddha Fields) where dwell the Buddhists who have attained beatitude. Buddha deserves his personal glory because of his comprehensive knowledge of truth and his infinite compassion exercised through untold aeons. The glory of the beatified Buddhists is similarly founded upon their individual knowledge and individual treasure of compassionate deeds. Insofar as knowledge and compassion for men are recognized as the chief meritorious works, the Mahayana is here faithful to the teaching of the founder, but it is obvious that this eschatology of the Buddha Fields is a far cry from the beliefs of primitive Buddhism. The historical teacher of the Path to ataraxia has become a superhuman Being, while nirvana has been reinterpreted as survival in a state of conscious, individual bliss.

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[29] The Mahayana has not a canon of sacred books so strictly defined as is the Pali Canon of the Hinayana. Rather, during a period of some hundreds of years there grew up in India an extensive literature of the speculations and imaginings of Mahayanist monks, and these books were regarded in a loose sense as founts of Mahayana doctrine. Chinese and Japanese Buddhists were eager to secure copies, private individuals and even royal commissions making the long and dangerous journey to India for that purpose. Among the books brought from India which powerfully influenced Far Eastern Buddhism may be named *The Lotus of the True Law* and *The Diamond Sutra.* — Mahayana philosophic schools were numerous, the most famous the Vijnanavada and the Sunyavada. The former explained our belief in the reality of external objects and thinking selves as illusion, but admitted an indefinable Reality. The Sunyavada equally held the doctrine of illusion, but was so noncommittal on the question of any Reality whatever that the school deteriorated into Nihilism. Mahayana as a popular religion, of course, was not built upon these tenuous scholastic speculations.

More must be said about the denizens of the Buddha Fields, but let us turn for a moment to the earthly Mahayanist community. Its spiritual ideal is the universal compassion of Sakyamuni. "May I become a Buddha for the salvation of the world" is the vow by which one (layman or monk) enters upon the good way: it is a kind of baptism which enrolls one in the faith. The matter of the vow is avoidance of all offense to any living creature, abhorrence of all forms of egoism and hatred, and heroism in active charity. A large commitment, this, for selfish human nature, and the sincere Mahayanist is constantly repenting and renewing his vow. Both for public services and for private prayers there are a variety of formulae expressive of repentance and good resolution. The benign Buddha is thought to shower down from his empyrean abode abundant grace to help the faithful toward the attainment of the ideal universal benevolence. After death there are various possibilities — a hell of physical torments, rebirth in this world for another try at the good life, or the Buddha Fields. The faithful man who has made reasonable progress toward universal benevolence is domiciled in the last named and is called a *bodhisatva* (future Buddha). He is happy, but continues for aeons perfecting himself in the practice of benevolence, assuming fictive bodies on earth to help the distressed. He may choose, as did Manjusri, to persevere in this career of benevolence for eternity, or else he may pass after a time into the serene impassivity of full-fledged Buddhahood.

It is clear that the economy of salvation just outlined is based primarily upon good deeds, and one may say that the success of Buddhism as a social and civilizing force has proceeded from these high ideals of helpfulness to fellow men. However, Mahayana Buddhism before it left India had borrowed from that land's vast storehouse of religious ideas a doctrine of salvation through *fides fiducialis.* This was *bhakti* (roughly translated as "devotion"), a doctrine which found its first literary expression in the Hindu classic *Bhagavadgita.* We quote from the speech of Krishna (who is an *avatar* or incarnation of the god Vishnu) to Prince Arjuna.

> If one of earnest spirit set before me with devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I enjoy this offering of devotion.
> Whatever be thy works, thine eating, thy sacrifice, thy gifts, thy mortification, make it an offering to me.
> Thus shalt thou be released from the bonds of works fair or foul of fruit; thy spirit inspired by casting off of works, thou shalt be delivered and come unto me.
> I am indifferent to all born beings; there is none whom I hate, none whom I love. But they that worship me with devotion, dwell in me and I in them.
> Even though he should be a doer of exceeding evil that worships me with undivided worship, he shall be deemed good, for he is of right purpose.
> Speedily he becomes righteous of soul, and comes to lasting peace; be assured that none who is devoted to me is lost.
> For even they that are born of sin — women, traffickers and serfs — if they turn to me, come to the supreme path.[30]

Among the Hindus Krishna is the god to whom bhakti is especially directed. Though it seems strange, the Buddhists chose as their object of devotion not Sakyamuni, but Amitabha. Who the latter was, we do not know: the name appears to be Persian and means Infinite Life. In faith, however, he is the wholly gracious Buddha who presides over the Paradise of the West, welcoming there all those who in this life honor his name, trust in him, and do him a little service. Indian Mahayana associated with him an illustrious Bodhisattva named Avalokitesvara. Both of them loom very great in the Buddhism of the whole Far East.

For the rest, the Mahayana of India ran a course that must have made Sakyamuni stir unhappily in his nirvanic repose. In north and northwest India popular demand for approachable divine personalities and for the externals of worship led to a syncretism of Buddhism with the older polytheism. Immemorial cult practices, to which popular religion always clings tenaciously, were not interfered with by the monks while they preached their Buddhist code of respect for all life, universal kindness, resignation, and pious beneficence to the members of the Order. These same teachers of the north and northwest initiated the policy of peaceful assimilation of many gods, which was to be followed by missionaries of the Teaching as they passed beyond Indian frontiers eastward. In the words of S. Radhakrishnan:

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[30] *Bhagavadgita,* L. D. Barnett's trans. in Everyman's Library, Lesson IX. The *Bhagavadgita* is introduced as an episode in the epic poem *Mahabharata,* with whose action it has no connection. Such interpolations are numerous in the great poem and are the work of philosophers and sectaries who advertised their doctrines by inserting them in this most popular of Hindu books.

> The traditional gods of the Hindus were fitted into a new system, where separate places and functions were assigned to them. Mahayanism is so called because it included a vast number of bodhisattvas, archangels and saints, which are only the ancient gods of Vedic Aryans thinly disguised by Buddhistic symbolism.[31]

Here, too, in the milieu of the northwest's mixed population the religious art of Buddhism began. There are records that very early in central India religious symbols, such as the lotus and the wheel, were used by Buddhists, but neither Sakyamuni nor the events of his life were represented. In the early first century B.C. there appeared in the Buddhist community of Gandhara, in the northwest, figures of the founder. The artistic influence was obviously Greek, for the figures are adaptations of the Apollo figure known throughout the Hellenic world. Scenes from Buddha's life followed; Buddhist communities to the south began to imitate the northern custom; Greek types faded out with the disappearance of the adventurous Greek invaders, so that Buddhist art grew distinctly Indian.

We see in all this a preparation for the period when late Indian Buddhism was not sharply distinguished from Hinduism. Close the monasteries and liquidate the monks — as the invading Moslems in fact did — and Buddhist believers without too great a strain on their faith would be transformed into Hindus.

Monasteries have proved historically the nucleus and the sustaining force of the Buddhist religion. It cannot be doubted that the impulse to monastic life came from Sakyamuni personally. The first monasteries were doubtless the "resthouses" where during the rainy months the first preachers of the Path retired for meditation and discussion. "In my opinion," says Vallee Poussin, "we may in all security affirm that Sakyamuni founded a monastic order and laid down — not *ne varietur,* that goes without saying — the disciplinary and meditative rule of life which is to end in Nirvana."[32] If we look at the monasticism of a few centuries after Sakyamuni's passing, which is a type for later monasticism, the following institutions appear. The applicant goes through a novitiate under the direction of two older monks, who make clear to their charge what the community will demand of him. He then enters the community, but is bound to it only so long as he pleases. Desiring to leave, he merely approaches the superior with the formula: "I have my possessions, my pleasures, my relatives in mind." If later he wishes to re-enter the monastery, he loses his place in seniority. Community exercises consist of reading of the holy books, prayers, meditation, confession of sins in "chapter," begging from door to door. The deportment of the monk is regulated by a fantastically minute ritualism, which prescribes how he is to sit, eat, drink, and so on. Twice a month there is a fast day, on which a public confession of sins is made. There are also communities of Buddhist nuns, always located near a community of monks, that the latter may come to instruct the nuns and listen to their public confessions. For the support of the monasteries and nunneries there are sometimes permanent foundations, but commonly the monks and nuns depend upon the alms of the people, who are assured of a happy afterlife as reward for their charity.

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[31] Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy,* Vol. I, p. 598.

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[32] C.T.S., *Studies in Comparative Religion,* Vol. I, p. 8.

31. Golden Age of Indian Buddhism

IN THE summer of 326 B.C. Alexander set up twelve altars on the banks of the Hyphasis to mark the easternmost limit of his conquest. He returned to Babylon, and his plan of completing India's subjugation by a new campaign was frustrated by death. His lieutenants quickly yielded his Indian provinces to the forceful Chandragupta of Magadha. The latter united northern and central India into the Maurya Empire, and by 304 was so strongly entrenched that Seleucus Nikator formally renounced the Hellenic claim to territory beyond the Indus. The Greek Megasthenes instead was accredited as ambassador to Chandragupta's court at Pataliputra (modern Patna), where he wrote a valuable account of the land's beliefs, customs, and government.

Under Asoka (274–232 B.C.) the Maurya Empire was extended as far south as Madras. A man of blood during the early part of his reign, this emperor, on his conversion to Buddhism, was transformed into an illustrious promoter of morality and religion, a generous patron of corporal works of mercy for the relief of the poor and sick. To his pillar and rock edicts we are indebted for our first substantial fund of information on the spread of Buddhism. The edicts are found throughout most of India — exceptions would be the extreme south and east — and attest the ruler's patronage of Buddhism and his desire that its principles be practiced as a means toward public tranquillity. Even beyond these geographical limits, the inscriptions assert, Asoka used his imperial prestige successfully to bring neighboring states to the practice of Buddhist morality.[33]

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[33] The edicts are inscribed either on natural rock formations or on carved pillars. Language is Prakrit, the vernacular derivative of Sanskrit: there are dialectical differences in northern, central, western inscriptions. Script is Kharoshti in north, elsewhere Brachmi.

On the Girnar Rock may be read Asoka's exhortation to live virtuously.

> Now, ceremonies should certainly be practiced.
> But ceremonies like these bear little fruit indeed.
> But the following practice bears much fruit, viz., the practice of morality.
> Herein the following are comprised: proper courtesy to slaves and servants, reverence to elders, gentleness to animals, liberality to Brahmanas and Sramanas; these and other such virtues are called the practice of morality.[34]

On the pillar edict at Delhi we read an encomium of "compassion, liberality, truthfulness, purity, gentleness and goodness." Lest the mere hope of merit prove insufficient as a sanction, a special police force called "Mahamatras of morality" was established, as we learn from the rock of Kalsi.[35] A comparison with Buddhist codes would of itself reveal with fair certainty whence the morality of the Edicts derives. However, Asoka's Buddhist affiliations are made clear by explicit texts. The Sarnath pillar speaks of his concern for monks, nuns, and layfolk.

> The Samgha cannot be divided by anyone. The monk or nun who shall break up the Samgha should be caused to put on white robes and to reside in a non residence (sc. a sparsely settled region). This edict must be submitted both to the Samgha of monks and to the Samgha of nuns. . . . Let the lay-worshipers come on every fast day in order to be inspired with confidence in this edict.[36]

It is interesting thus to hear India's emperor exerting himself to protect monastic institutes from sowers of discord. Further solicitude is attested by the Calcutta-Bairat rock.

> The Magadha king Priyadarsin, having saluted the Samgha, hopes they are well and comfortable. It is known to you, Sirs, how great is my reverence and faith in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Samgha. Whatsoever, Sirs, has been spoken by the Blessed Buddha, all that has been quite well spoken. But that the true Dharma may be of long duration, I feel bound to recommend (he here names seven particular discourses of Sakyamuni). I desire, Sirs, that many groups of monks and nuns may repeatedly listen to these expositions

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[34] *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum,* New Edition (1925), Vol. I, p. 17.

[35] *Ibid.,* pp. 33, 34.

[36] *Ibid.,* pp. 162, 163.

> of the Dharma and may reflect on them. In the same way laymen and laywomen should act.[37]

What is called the Buddhist profession of faith is here uttered by Asoka; namely, "I put my trust in the Buddha, I put my trust in the Law, I put my trust in the Brotherhood." It is also highly interesting to find in Asoka's inscription the famous proverb: "Whatever was spoken by Buddha, was well spoken" (a proverb which a later age inverted to read: Whatever has been well said, was said by the Buddha). A puissant emperor suggesting points of meditation to monks and nuns is, of course, an anomaly of religious history. We need not accept the legend that Asoka thrice turned over to the monasteries the whole wealth of his empire, nor that he became and died a monk; but that he was a sincere Buddhist is certain history. Remorse for the slaughter and misery he had caused in conquering the Kalingas first effected a change of heart in him. Just why his thoughts turned to Buddhism we do not know, but about the eleventh year of his reign he became a *Buddhasakya* or *upasaka* (lay disciple) and visited the sacred Bodh tree.[38] At first "not very zealous," he was stirred to zeal next year by a visit he paid to a monastery, probably by the edification he received from the monks and their exhortations.[39] Upward of eight months thereafter he spent on a tour—a proceeding not uncommon for Indian rulers, but in this case distinguished by a unique purpose. He was not aiming at impressing subject peoples by royal pageantry nor at checking up on the conduct of provincial officials. He was making a survey of the state of "morality" in his empire and considering means for the furtherance of the same.[40] Fruit of the tour was a series of edicts enjoining on all the practice of typically Buddhist ethics. In his twentieth regnal year devotion led him to Sakyamuni's birthplace, a visit which he records on the Rummindei Pillar as follows.

> When king Devanampriya Priyadarsin had been anointed twenty years, he came himself and worshiped this spot, because the Buddha Sakyamuni was born here. He caused to be carved a stone

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[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 174.

[38] *Ibid.*, Rock edicts at Shahbazgarhi, Maski, Sahasram, Mansehra, Vol. I, pp. 68, 69, 77, 171, 177.

[39] *Ibid.*, Rupnath rock inscription, p. 167.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

> figure of a horse (probably his royal symbol) and to be erected a stone pillar to show that the Blessed One was born here. He made this village of Lummini free of taxes.[41]

The *odium theologicum* had no part in Asoka's spirit, for he tells us[42] that he honored all sects, relieved their necessities, and desired them to live in concord with one another. Personally, he was a good lay believer, who reverenced Sakyamuni as a supreme teacher; but there is no evidence that he worshiped him as divine, nor in fact does he mention any divinity. He regarded the Buddhist Dharma (*sc.* law) as the ideal code of conduct, without closing his eyes to the excellent moral precepts of other sects. The Samgha of monks he respected as his worthy spiritual fathers and the Samgha of nuns as holy women. Both Samghas he subsidized with royal munificence, though he had a care too for the comfort of many other ascetics of quite different religious views. That he was conversant with Buddhist speculation does not appear. Metempsychosis and nirvana, for instance, do not occur in the edicts. Sanction for the good life is individual and social happiness, merit in the next world, heaven.

Asoka's reign has passed into Buddhist tradition as a kind of Golden Age. Not again was the faith to enjoy royal patronage throughout so wide an extent of Indian territory. When the Maurya Empire, within half a century of Asoka's death, yielded to the centrifugal force so characteristic of great Indian empires, Buddhism's career became checkered. In the various kingdoms, broken off from the core of Pataliputra, rajas might be more or less favorable to Buddhism, but there were among them no Asokas either in magnanimity or puissance. In the shrunken core of Pataliputra ruled Pushyamitra, who whether from conviction or policy was a zealot for Brahminism and an opponent of Buddhism. In partisan tradition he ranks as Buddhism's Diocletian, just as Asoka is extolled as its Constantine.

There followed a spectacular interlude which brought on the scene another figure famed in Buddhist annals—the Greek Menander. Alexander's successors had renounced claim to territory south of the Indus when confronted by a united India, and for more than a century had maintained cordial relations with the

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[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 164, 165.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Maurya emperors. The collapse of the empire was a matter of deep concern to Demetrius, king of the Hellenic kingdom of Bactria, which bordered India on the northwest. In addition to alarm at the passing of the friendly Maurya Dynasty, another motive powerfully stirred him. Firmly believing a fictitious genealogy which made him out a descendant of Darius I and Alexander, he fancied that he had a title to northwest and north India derived from the conquests of those illustrious progenitors. He determined, therefore, to make his own play for the rich stakes before Pushyamitra could gather up the shattered fragments of the Maurya empire. It was an audacious plan, for the distances were vast and his Greek army, though highly efficient, was numerically little more than a striking force. However, he counted shrewdly on the support of "fifth column" elements. From Alexander's day the Greeks had known that India's unity was geographical and not a unity of national feeling. Secondly, Demetrius sensed that *Yavanas* (Greeks), for decades now on friendly terms with northern and central Indians, would at the very least be as welcome as overlords as would be the southern Vidisans of Pushyamitra. Finally, though as a typical Hellenic monarch he held no brief for any sect, yet he guessed that the shock to Buddhists of the loss of Maurya patronage and their deep distrust of the Brahminizing Sunga king (Pushyamitra) would throw the Samgha and its numerous lay adherents into his camp.

About the year 182 B.C., then, Demetrius occupied without opposition the province of Gandhara—significantly a Buddhist holy land since Asoka's day—and moved toward the Indus. He crossed its northern reaches at Attock where a century and a half before Alexander had crossed. Following still in Alexander's footsteps, he next established himself at strategic Taxila, where he revealed the outlines of his daring plan to his troops. His general, Menander, was to drive along the Alexander route, but to carry on even to Pushyamitra's capital at Pataliputra. Demetrius himself was to proceed down the Indus and conquer the western coast as far south as the Narbada River. Eventually, Menander was to advance westward from Pataliputra and effect a junction with Demetrius advancing up the Narbada. The strategy was to force Pushyamitra out of Pataliputra and catch him in his own native Vidisa between the two jaws of the Greek pincers.

Fate intervened in the person of Eukratides, whom Antiochus Epiphanes dispatched to Bactria to retake that province of the Seleucid Empire from the usurping Demetrius. News that Bactria was threatened reached Demetrius when his Indian plan was well on toward completion. Menander had taken Pataliputra and the Greeks were steadily advancing down the western coast from the Indus Delta. Resigning his command to Apollodotus and instructing Menander to retreat to the Punjab, Demetrius returned to Bactria, where he was defeated and slain. Rather than submit to Eukratides, Menander and Apollodotus proclaimed themselves independent kings, the one with his capital at Sagala in the Punjab, the other with his at Barygaza on the western coast.

Eukratides moved into Gandhara, to come to grips with Demetrius' two brilliant generals. He defeated and slew Apollodotus, as the first whom he met, and then crossed the Indus to deal with Menander. But the Seleucid Empire at his back was now breaking up under the blows of the Parthians, and his presence in Bactria was imperative, so he withdrew beyond the Hindu Kush to meet his death in battle. Menander easily rallied to himself all the subjects of Apollodotus and united them with his own subjects in a single Greco-Indian kingdom. This kingdom comprised, besides Gandhara, about 250,000 square miles of northwestern India. A kingdom of homogeneous elements must not be imagined, nor one of closely centralized administration. Foreigners had long been entering from the northwest frontier and from the coast. Religiously and in cultural matters orthodox Brahminism no longer dominated, for the sects were numerous and vigorous. Over such a population Menander aimed at no despotic rule, but, as his coinage implies, presented himself as *Soter*. What was understood was salvation from the ungrateful dilemma of political chaos or Pushyamitra's rule. "His empire was essentially an Indian empire with a small Greek ruling caste; it was not a Greek empire, as the Seleucid was meant to be, but something much more in the nature of a partnership, as Demetrius had intended."[43]

The respective roles which Pushyamitra and Menander play in Buddhist tradition give us, in default of clearer evidence, an indication of the sentiments of the faithful toward the new empire. The Sunga monarch ranks as a persecutor, while his rival and contemporary has been endowed with all the amiable qualities of Asoka. That Buddhists were numerous in the Punjab and in Gandhara cannot be questioned. To them Menander's politic slogan of *Soter* promised at least a fair field and no favors in the matter of religion; and this was no slight gain after the uncertainty of the days of Mauryan breakup and in presence of the Brahminizing policy of Pushyamitra. Menander, as the heir of Demetrius' dream of a partnership in empire of Greeks and Indians, was at pains to foster favorable dispositions in so large a section of his subjects by deference to the holy men of the Samgha and by complacent sanction of Buddhistic practices. After the normal fashion of Indian rulers, he doubtless bestowed occasional subsidies on Buddhists (as indeed on the members of other sects) and he knew how, as an expert politician, to impart to these benefactions a flavor of favoritism. Perhaps he found expositions of Sakyamuni's teaching interesting, for in this he would have been but the usual intelligent and curious Hellenic king. All this appears to be the core of historical fact in the Menander legend. "No one can prove that Menander was not a Buddhist; but his adoption as his coin type of the one Greek deity who was practically never equated with anything oriental—Athene—is against it; and on what is known it seems to me quite unsafe to call him a Buddhist even in the limited sense in which Antigonus Gonatus, the nearest analogy, is sometimes called a Stoic."[44]

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[43] *The Greeks in Bactria and India,* by W. W. Tarn (Cambridge University Press, 1938), p. 200. This book brilliantly reconstructs the story of Greco-Indian relations subsequent to Alexander and of the Greco-Indian kingdom of Menander.

In the first century B.C. a confederation of Iranian tribes crossed the Hindu Kush and engulfed the Greco-Indian kingdom founded by Menander. The Kushanas were the chief tribe in the confederation; hence Indian history knows the new dynasty as the Kushana. Upon Kanishka, the third Kushana king, Buddhist tradition dwells affectionately. The story of Asoka's compunction for his bloodthirstiness and of his consequent conversion to Buddhism is retold of Kanishka, but there is the important difference that for Asoka the story is certified by his own inscriptions. Perhaps

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[44] Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 269. The *Milinda Panha* (Questions of King Menander) is one of the Buddhist holy books. In it the king first disputes with the sage Nagasena; then seeks enlightenment from him; finally renounces his kingdom and turns Buddhist monk. For evaluation, cf. Tarn, p. 414 ff.

Kanishka did go through the same psychological experience, but better proof is desired than a tendentious tradition. He is said, too, to have been puzzled in his study of "the teaching" by the tenets of the different Buddhist schools and to have summoned a council of five hundred sages to meet in Kashmir, to secure some uniformity. The council seems indeed to be an historical fact, but the most reliable account of it makes no mention of the Kushana king. Another tradition asserts that his zeal for the faith led him to kidnap the scholar Ashvaghosa from Madura, that he might have him near him at his court in Peshawar. Again the most reliable accounts know nothing of this. Benefactions to the Samgha, building of numerous stupas and monasteries are likewise, on the Asoka model, attributed to him. The facts we know are, first, that the religious symbols on Kanishka's coins are of no one religion, for Iranian, Zoroastrian, Indian, Buddhistic, and Greek religious symbols occur. Secondly, he patronized Gandhara art, which was closely associated with Buddhism. Thirdly, whether he was Ashvaghosa's patron or not, the Buddhist sage's literary labors do fall within this period. Still, Kanishka's whole reign was an age of renaissance, so that no special conclusion can be drawn from the flourishing during it of Buddhistic art and letters. Certainly, when the king's name appears in contemporary Buddhist inscriptions, it is there merely to mark a date and not as the name of a special patron and believer. During the period of Kushana rule (first to fourth centuries of our era) Buddhism enjoyed prosperity. (Kushanaland extended in its palmiest days from Benares in north-central India to the Oxus and the borders of China: in the third and fourth centuries this vast territory gradually slipped into the hands of the Sassanid Empire of Asia and the Gupta Empire of India.)

No less flourishing was the Buddhism of the western Indian coast under Saka kings. There a kind of Thebaid of the Samgha had grown up. The hills which in the Bombay Presidency (to use the term familiar from British days) parallel the coast as a barrier between the coastal plain and the interior had been a resort for hermits from an indefinite antiquity. These holy men dwelt in rock caves either natural or cut out of the hillsides. Fergusson and Burgess in their classic, *Cave Temples of India,* count nine hundred such caves in the Bombay Presidency or on its borders. Of these the great majority are shown by archaeological investigation to have been used by Buddhist monks. The rest were mostly the abodes of Brahmin or Jain ascetics. For the period which we now treat (roughly late first and early second centuries A.D.) the caves in the region of Nasik are of prime importance.

Nasik is a site near the headwaters of the Gadavari, about fifty miles north-northwest of Bombay and about forty miles removed from the coast. The caves "are situated about 300 feet above the level of the plain below, have a northerly aspect, and extend about a quarter of a mile along the face of the hill."[45] Boring into the native rock the workmen cut out spacious halls in the hillside, then sculptors completed the work with an ornamental façade and with carvings on walls and pillars. The purpose of most of the caves was to serve as monasteries (*viharas*), but there was also a temple carved out for Buddhistic worship. In each vihara there is a large central hall (the chapter house where the monks assembled for meditation, confession of sins, and such common exercises), into which opened the cells of the individual monks. Both in the viharas and in the temple (*chaitya*) the decorations, such as there are, suggest the Hinayana rather than the Mahayana. Pillars are surmounted by animal capitals, while in spots, especially on the façade of the chaitya, fretwork carving occurs. Of Buddhist symbols the Bodh tree and the Wheel of Life are noted. A few human figures are carved and figures which appear to be demons are emerging from the base of the temple façade, but Sakyamuni himself is nowhere pictured. The place of honor and of worship in the temple is occupied by a small stupa or relic tower.

The inscriptions are such a mine of information on the customs and condition of Buddhism that quotations are in order. Above the entrance of Cave No. 3 we read:

> Success! In the nineteenth year of King Siri Pulumayi Vasithiputa . . . the great queen Gotami Balasiri (laudation of queen and of her son with mention of numerous Aryan heroes and demigods) caused, as a pious gift, this cave to be made quite equal to the divine mansions. And this cave the great queen, mother of a Maharaja and grandmother of a Maharaja, gives to the Samgha of monks, and her grandson grants to this meritorious donation the village of Pisajipadaka.[46]

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[45] *Cave Temples of India,* p. 266.

[46] *Epigraphia Indica,* Vol. VIII, pp. 61, 62.

The Nasik district itself was borderland between the Andhra kingdom and the kingdom established by the Western Sakas (called Western Kshatrapas), sovereignty passing from one kingdom to the other and back again in the game of aggression and counteraggression. Though at this time the military successes of Gautamiputra Satakarni had won Nasik for the Andhra side, the inscriptions bear witness of the Kshatrapas' enduring interest in the Buddhist community. A monk's cell in Cave No. 10 is a gift of a Kshatrapa princess.

> Success! This cell, the gift of Dakhamitra, wife of Ushavadata the son of Dinika, and daughter of king Napahana the Kshatrapa.[47]

The whole of Cave No. 10 was excavated at the expense of this Ushavadata, who has left us a catalogue of his good deeds cut in the enduring rock. Besides direct donations of money to Brahmin ascetics, "he caused one-hundred-thousand Brahmins to be fed the year round." He purchased a field of a Brahmin and bestowed its revenues "to procure food for all monks, without distinction, dwelling in my cave." He clothed them, too, and gave them spending money.[48]

After all, it was an old Indian custom for kings and nobles to dispense largess to all kinds of holy men. Perhaps more truly significant of Buddhism's prosperity are the Nasik inscriptions attesting the devotion of common folk to the Samgha. Lest the well-fed and well-clothed monks of Cave 10 might still want something, the wife of a minor Saka official records that she,

> The lay devotee Vishnudatta gave perpetual endowment in order to provide medicines for the sick of the Samgha, of monks of whatever sect and origin dwelling in this monastery on mount Trirasmi.[49]

Cave No. 7 is "the pious gift of Tapasini, a female ascetic and disciple of the reverend Savasa, granted to the universal Samgha."[50] For Cave No. 6 the monks have to thank a pious merchant.

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[47] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 83. Probably Ushavadata was a convert to Buddhism and narrates his immense benefactions to Brahmins merely to contrast them with what now, "inspired by true religion," he is doing for the Samgha.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

> Success! This cave, a pious gift of the householder Vira, a merchant; a cell of his wife Nandasiri and a cell of his daughter Purisadatta; the cave thus completed to four cells has been bequeathed to the universal Samgha.[51]

Cave No. 8 is "a pious gift of Mugudasa, a fisherman, together with his next of kin." Cave 12 was excavated at the expense of the merchant Ramanaka, who also established an endowment for clothing for the monks. Two other caves were opened respectively by a husbandman and a scribe. For the opening of another a whole village contributed.[52]

We may therefore conclude that under Kushana, Andhra, and Kshatrapa rule Buddhism, both lay and monastic, enjoyed definite prosperity. Less favorable times were in the offing, for Hinduism was to be the professed faith of the dynasty which in the fourth and fifth centuries reduced Kushanas, Andhras, and Kshatrapas to the rank of kinglets of outlying districts. Inscriptions testify that the Guptas ruled all of central India and received voluntary or enforced tribute from a number of border states. The period 350–450 (covering the reigns of Samudragupta, Chandragupta II, and Kumaragupta) was the Periclean Age of Indian art, letters, and science. But all this culture was essentially Hindu. Though there was no persecution, Buddhism lacked royal patronage and Buddhistic ideas were allowed to exert no influence. The long, posthumous inscription of the Allahabad-Kausambi Pillar, which sets forth the merits of Samudragupta, may serve as an illustration.

> (King's titulary, stressing his descent from the great Hindu family of the Lichchavi) having gone to the abode of Indra the lord of the gods — the glorious Samudragupta the Maharajadhiraja, who was the supporter of the real truth of the scriptures. The building of the pale of religion, the path of the sacred hymns (enumeration of still other virtues): what is there that does not belong to him? He was equal to the gods Dhanada, Varuna, Indra and Antaka. He was a mortal only in celebrating the rites and observances of mankind, but otherwise was a god dwelling on earth.[53]

The inscriptions of this period record numerous subsidies conferred by persons of all ranks upon Brahmins. One inscription at Sanchi seems to be the only example of largess to Buddhist monks and in it a mere five monks are mentioned as benefited. There is a pathetic note struck in an inscription in which a monk, lacking the generous benefactors of other days, sets up at his own expense a statue of Sakyamuni.[54] If we may argue from the inscriptions which have survived, there has been a notable shift, since Andhra-Kshatrapa days, away from Buddhism and toward Hinduism.

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[51] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 90, 92, 95.

[53] *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, pp. 10–17.

Under a dynasty professedly Hindu and in an age of intellectual renaissance, it was but natural for Brahminical schools to direct vigorous polemics against rival Buddhism. The great critics of Buddhist philosophy—Kumarila and Samkara—belong to later centuries, but the Gupta period witnessed earnest efforts to prove the metaphysics of the monks intellectually disreputable. Echoes of these controversies seem to be found in the *Mahabharata,* where irrelevant aspersions on Buddhism have been interpolated.[55]

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[54] *Ibid.,* p. 47.

[55] Cf. Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy,* Vol. I, pp. 484, 606; Vol. II, pp. 23, 29.

32. Indian Buddhism Absorbed by Hinduism

FROM 399 to 414 India was visited by the Chinese Fa-hsien. A sincerely religious Buddhist, he grieved that his fellow monks in China lacked many of the scriptural and disciplinary writings necessary for orthodoxy in faith and exactness in observance. His zeal moved him to undertake with several companions a journey to the cradleland of the faith, that he might study the customs there and secure authentic documents. They followed approximately the Great Silk Route from western China, crossed to the right bank of the Indus above Peshawar, and journeyed southward to this latter city. Here begins the Chinese pilgrim's account of India, which is disappointing to the historian, but curious and informative to the religionist. Fa-hsien has no eye except for monasteries, holy spots, and Buddhist practices; no ear except for edifying legends.

Peshawar and its environs could number about three thousand "priests," some of Hinayana and some of Mahayana persuasion. Ten days' journey south of Peshawar the pilgrims recrossed the Indus in a region where they noted that both branches of the faith were in a flourishing condition, and where the people reverently marveled that religion had drawn them on so far a journey.[56] Typical of Fa-hsien's mentality is the portion of the narrative which follows. He traveled southeast for eighty days to Mathura – through the heart of the populous Punjab and the northern reaches of the Indian desert. Everything should have been new and marvelous to a Chinese, but all that Fa-hsien records is that he saw many monasteries en route and estimated nearly ten thousand priests.

[56] *The Travels of Fa-hsien,* transl. by H. A. Giles (Cambridge U. Press, 1923), pp. 18, 19. The use of the word "priests" is rather confusing. To judge from the context, the word seems to be synonymous with "monks."

At Mathura he heard of "the middle kingdom" lying to the south with its monks and nuns, and of Kapitha still farther south with its thousand priests and its pagodas (relic towers). However, he did not visit these lands, but proceeded from Mathura (where there were many lay-Buddhists and where even the officials showed great respect for the priests) down the Jumna to the kingdom of Kosala. There "inside the city (Sravasti, the capital) the people are few and scattered, amounting in all to about two-hundred families." The Shrine of the Garden of Gold and other Buddhist holy places were near by. In Kosala Fa-hsien counted "ninety-six schools of heretics, all of whom recognized the present state of existence." In this remark our Chinese pilgrim reveals himself as a Mahayanist either of the Yogacara or of the Madhyamika school.[57]

Turning their steps northeastward the pilgrims, with what religious emotions we may imagine, reached Sakyamuni's birthplace at Kapilavastu. The report is a jeremiad. "Therein no king nor people are to be found: it is just like a wilderness, except for priests and some tens of families." Again: "The country of Kapilavastu is desolate and barren, with very few inhabitants. On the road white elephants and lions are to be feared: travelers must not be incautious."[58] A story is then told which is typical of many which Fa-hsien's pious credulity deemed worthy of narrating. At Ramagrama stood the stupa containing an eighth part of Buddha's relics, but even these holy bones did not insure the shrine against the universal neglect. There was no one to sweep away the foul debris from the courts of the fane, no one to attend to the daily lustration of fresh water. And for decades elephants came every day from the jungle, to sweep the holy place and to scatter the lustral water, until in very recent times a little monastery was built near by and staffed.[59]

Of Kusenagara, where Buddha died, we read: "In this city, too, the inhabitants are few and scattered, and are only such as are connected with the priesthood."[60] Stupas and monasteries in the neighborhood are mentioned, but the impression left is one of hard times and decay. A bit further on Fa-hsien says that in the whole country of Kausambi there were no more than a hundred priests. He adds (on hearsay) that in the whole of the Deccan there is but a single monastery and that the people there are not believers.[61]

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[57] *Ibid.*, p. 30 sqq. On Buddhist schools cf. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 612 sqq.

[58] *Travels of Fa-hsien*, p. 38.

[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 40.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

The pilgrim was to close his stay in India with experiences of deep religious consolation. After witnessing so much neglect of holy places and so lamentable a decrease in the number of the laity, he discovered at Pataliputra the first of those Buddhist writings in quest of which he had been journeying in exile for twelve years. His perseverance undaunted by a strange language and script, he undertook the work of translation. From Pataliputra he traveled eighteen days' journey "through the great kingdom of Champa" to the mouth of the Hugli "in the country of Tamluk. Here were twenty-four monasteries all with resident priests, and the Buddhist faith is very flourishing."[62] For two years he sojourned in this happy region, finding all the books he sought, copying them into Chinese, drawing pictures of images. Taking a ship to Ceylon, he found that island a very garden of the faith, such as doubtless he had hoped to find in India. "The people of the country (Ceylon) say that there are between fifty and sixty thousand priests altogether, all of whom get their food from a common stock."[63] The king was a believer and a patron. Fa-hsien paid his religious devoir at the magnificent Shrine of the Tooth, where the sight of a Chinese fan being laid as an offering brought tears and sighs of nostalgia from his heart. He saw the splendid pageantry when Buddha's tooth was borne in procession and attended the impressive obsequies of a Lo-han (Buddhist saint).[64] On his long and perilous sea voyage from Ceylon he noted that Buddhism was in a bad state in Java.

In Buddhist tradition the name of Hun has the same connotation of ruthless cruelty which it has in the history of western Europe. Fa-hsien had met them on his journey to India, calling them Epphalites; but it was some little time after his return to China that they began a series of typically Hunic raids into India proper. Destroying what remained of Kushana power in the north, they swarmed into the Gupta dominions. Scandagupta beat them badly in one pitched battle, but they returned in force to inflict such heavy blows on Gupta power that the empire was shattered.

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[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 61–63.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 67 sqq.

The Huna king (if indeed he were a king and not merely a satrap of the Huna power), whose name is anathema to Buddhists, is Mihirakula. On his persecuting activities the chief documentary source is another Chinese pilgrim who wrote about a hundred years after the expulsion of the Hunas. However, this Hiuen Tsang is not very consistent, notably in what he says of the role played by the Buddhist Baladitya in expelling the Huns. In default of clearer records, a theoretic reconstruction may be attempted. The Hun was essentially a raider and plunderer, not caring about establishing permanent political control in the territories which he overran. Now, all along the route of his Indian invasions lay the numerous monasteries spoken of by Fa-hsien. Enriched by centuries of pious benefactions, they hung like ripe fruit to tempt the Hunic horsemen. The monks, especially if they attempted to defend their property, would have been dealt with summarily. It is hard to believe that the Huns were interested in the religious angle. Their plundering and murdering of Buddhist holy men were merely instances of a ruthlessness which has become proverbial.

After the retreat of the Huns, no Gupta prince was forceful enough to reorganize the empire, which consequently dissolved into numerous small kingdoms. Though their names are known, their fortunes with one exception are scarcely recorded. The exception was the kingdom built by the Vardhana family with capital at Thanesar on the upper Jumna. For the heyday of this kingdom under Harshavardhana (regnal years 606–647) we have the narratives of a court poet and of a Chinese pilgrim.[65] A devout Buddhist and known in his native China as "Master of the Law," Hiuen Tsang sojourned in India from 629 to 645 for much the same purpose as his earlier compatriot, Fa-hsien. Buddhism had not advanced during the intervening two centuries, and Hiuen Tsang found the holy places still in disrepair and the faithful a scattered minority group. The spirit of intolerance, too, was in the air, for he tells us that shortly before his arrival a Shivite raja had destroyed Buddhist monasteries, broken the revered footprint of Sakyamuni at Pataliputra, and—crowning sacrilege—burned the sacred Bodh tree. Harshavardhana's coins as well as Banas' account reveal Harshavardhana as an eclectic in religion, while our Chinese authority asserts emphatically that he was a Buddhist. Banas does not cover the later years of the reign, and possibly the king kept the same coin types even after his conversion to Buddhism. Hence, the contradictory testimonies are reconcilable. At any rate, Harsha convened in his capital an assembly of his nobles and dependent princes, to honor the Chinese sage and to listen to his exposition of Buddhism. On this occasion exasperated Brahmins set fire to the assembly hall and in the confusion one of them attempted to kill the king. The would-be assassin's confession implicated a number of Brahmins, upon whom Harsha inflicted dreadful vengeance. His patronage of Buddhism had no lasting results, for anarchy followed his death, and an invasion of Tibetans and Nepalese shattered the Vardhana empire.

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[65] *The Harshacharita of Banas* and *The Travels of Hiuen Tsang.*

South of the Ganges and slightly southeast of Patna stood the medieval "university" of Nalanda mentioned by Hiuen Tsang. The walls of several large monasteries grouped about the ruins of a fine temple and relic tower still remain of this seventh-century center of Buddhistic learning. The site was chosen doubtless because the region of Nalanda was the locale of Sakyamuni's enlightenment and earliest preaching. Another "university" of almost equal fame was situated at Vallabhi on the western coast, close to the Buddhist Thebaid described on preceding pages.

At no period does Buddhism appear to have penetrated effectively either Rajputana or the Deccan. The Rajputs ("sons of the kings") fancied themselves descended from the Aryan heroes of the *Mahabharata,* though in fact both they and their subjects were of mixed race—Greek, Saca, Kushan, and so on. The conceit of pure Aryan blood, however, served to keep the princes loyal to the Vedic tradition and the region subservient to the Brahmins. As to the Deccan, its geographical position probably explains in part the failure of Buddhist penetration. For Buddhism developed first among the Ganges and its tributaries, then spread to the Punjab and northward. The natural barrier of the Vindhya Mountains isolated the Deccan to a degree from these regions and from the movements which were stirring in them. Furthermore, the Deccan's culture developed on the banks of a river system quite independent of the Gangetic.[66]

[66] Cf. *Cambridge Shorter History of India,* Part I, Chap. IX.

Buddhist establishments in border states proved missionary centers for the extraordinary diffusion of the teaching throughout the Far East. When the devout Fa-hsien and Hiuen Tsang came over the Great Silk Route to northwest India, they must have meditated piously on the early Bhikshus from Gandhara who over that same route had brought Sakyamuni's religion to China. Another route to China, more direct but more difficult, lay through Nepal and Tibet. Chinese influence was strong in these two countries, and in exchange for much borrowed Chinese culture Nepal passed on the knowledge of her most illustrious citizen, Siddhartha the Buddha. From seaports on the Bay of Bengal merchantmen carried preachers to foreign lands. In the Pallava kingdom, with capital at Kanchi near modern Madras, inscriptions show that Buddhism was a tolerated sect. Coastal trade from Kanchi southward was an obvious vehicle for the indoctrination of the Singhalese on the great island off India's southern tip. On the lower Ganges the Pala dynasts were fervent Buddhists, and in their trading vessels sailed monks to win converts in Burma, the Malayan Archipelago, and southern China.

In the beautiful land of Kashmir there flourished a strong kingdom as early as Alexander's day. Geographically and culturally, Kashmir was a link between Chinese Turkestan and the Indian Punjab. Religiously, it was a melting pot of the cult of a primitive water-god Nila (anciently the region was a vast lake), of Hinduism, and of Buddhism. For the study of this process we possess a good written source in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*.[67] Entertainingly chauvinistic, the author makes Kashmir the hub about which revolved the whole of India's political history. However, there is little reason to suspect the substance of his account of religious conditions since, though an ardent Shivite, he apportions praise and blame to various sects quite according to deserts.

Kalhana narrates how Asoka's son, Jalauka, king of Kashmir, became enraged at the noisy services in a Buddhist shrine and destroyed it, but later contritely rebuilt it. At this period, about 200 B.C., the *Bodhisattvas* (Buddhist monks) were reputed embodiments of all learning.[68] When the Kushans "Huska, Juska, and Kaniska" ruled Kashmir, "the land was to a great extent in the possession of the Buddhas."[69] The Buddhas (monks are meant) soon overreached themselves by prevailing on the successor of Kanishka to proscribe the rites of the ancient Nila. Prodigious snows descended as a punishment until, in obedience to a revelation of the Brahmin Condradeva, the people rebelled and "brought to an end the intolerable plague of Bhiksus."[70] Thousands of monasteries were burned and the villages appertaining to them were made over to the Brahmins. After this catastrophe Kashmirian Buddhism went into an eclipse and is not mentioned during several centuries of the chronicle.

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[67] Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, "A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir"; transl. by Sir M. A. Stein (Westminster: Constable, 1890).

[68] *Op. cit.*, Bk. I, v. 134.

To Meghavana, king in about A.D. 450, Kalhana transfers the glory of the Gupta emperor of that period, making him lord of India and even of the world. One of the acts of this half-legendary Kashmirian monarch was an international prohibition of the killing of any living thing. Hindu scruple is probably indicated. Kalhana adds, curiously, that Meghavana "helped the butchers and others to a sinless living by grants from his treasury."[71] Queens of this puissant raja built several Buddhist monasteries: in the charter of one of them it is specified that half of the building is to be occupied by celibate, the other half by married monks. After Meghavana's reign the chronicle is again silent on Buddhism for several centuries.

From the middle seventh to the middle eighth centuries dynasts of the Karkota family pushed Kashmir's frontiers northward into Tibetan territory and southward to Kanauj on the Ganges. Though Shivites, they were broadly tolerant. Of Muktapida we read: "That king, who was free from passion, built the ever-rich Rajavihara with a large quadrangle, a large temple and a large image of the Jina (*sc.* Buddha). . . . With just as many prasthas of copper he made the glorious statue of the Great Buddha, which reached up to the sky."[72] Muktapida's chief physician also erected a monastery, as did his chief minister. Of the latter the curious story is told that he possessed a magic-working charm, but traded it to the king for a Buddha image looted from Maghada.

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[69] *Ibid.,* Bk. I, vv. 168–173. The Kushans did conquer Kashmir, and what Kalhana says here of the prosperity of Buddhism agrees with what has been seen of Kanishka's Buddhist leanings.

[70] *Ibid.,* Bk. I, vv. 177–184.

[71] *Ibid.,* Bk. III, v. 6.

[72] *Ibid.,* Bk. IV, vv. 200–203.

A dark age followed the passing of the Karkota Dynasty. Monasteries and temples were plundered to replenish the royal treasury, as a long series of puppet rulers wore the crown at the pleasure of the dominant military. One such ruler used a Buddhist monastery as a concentration camp for his deposed father and his harem, supporting them therein on short commons and later conniving at the murder of the poor old man.[73] In the same monastery an enemy of still another king sought sanctuary, which so angered the king that he burned it down and melted down its famed Buddha colossus, to recast it in the image of Shiva. Terrible Queen Didda, ruling for half a century (955–1003) by means of intrigue and assassination, signalized a moment of repentance with the construction of a monastery.[74] A period of better government under Ananta and his grandson, Harsa, is noted by Kalhana during the eleventh century, but then discord again arose. Invasion found the land an easy prey at the start of the fourteenth century; the rich monasteries were looted and the monks fled to Tibet. Sovereignty passed into the Moslem line founded by Shams-ud-din. Survivals of Buddhism in the present-day Hinduism of Kashmir are the cult of Buddha as an *avatar* (incarnation) of Vishnu and the observance of Buddha's birthday as a major feast in the religious calendar.

Buddhism was only a memory in the land of its birth when Vasco da Gama dropped anchor off Calicut, to open the period of European aggrandizement. The causes of its decay and disappearance have been suggested. Recently A. Eustace Haydon has spoken of "the mellow atmosphere of universal tolerance" which he thinks marks the development of religion in India.[75] Buddhist tradition and the historical facts available enter demurrers against such a judgment. The Brahmins, fatted in privilege and holding the people subservient to their superstitions and exactions, never welcomed the counterclaims of the Samgha to the people's loyalty. Covert hostility passed on occasion into overt. Buddhist rajas, if due consideration is given to the long period involved and to the multitude of dynasties, were extremely few, so that Buddhism almost never enjoyed state patronage. Nevertheless, it is arguable that the faith might have weathered these unfavorable circumstances and maintained itself—as did Jainism, for instance—on Indian soil, had it not been for two other causes of dissolution. First, the Mahayana stood committed to a policy of syncretism, which led to the assimilation of Hindu gods and practices, weakened the distinctive character of Buddhist faith, and produced gradually a laity indistinguishable from the Hindus. Secondly, Buddhism's core was the monastic establishment, which kept alive the ascetic ideal of Sakyamuni and held together the laity in a self-conscious *ecclesia*. When Islam—first in Sind, then progressively in the Punjab and the valley of the Ganges—sacked the monasteries, Buddhism was doomed. The monks were murdered or fled the country; the laity, already well conditioned for the transformation, relapsed easily into Hinduism.

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[73] *Ibid.*, Bk. IV, v. 428 ff.

[74] *Ibid.*, Bk. VI, v. 303.

[75] *Biography of the Gods* (Macmillan, 1941), p. 90.

33. The Yellow Robe in Ceylon, Burma, and Thailand

IN ITS passage from India into foreign lands, the faith of Sakyamuni did not impose itself as the religion of a conquering race. Instead, missionary monks traveled the trade routes to the east, north, and south, winning a hearing and gradually building up new monastic and lay communities. Besides the zeal which urged them on, their success was due to the quality of the goods of the spirit which they offered. Buddha himself had stressed the virtues of universal kindness and mutual helpfulness, had tried to break down the barriers of social inequality which cause strife and oppression. It has been seen how this social gospel developed in Mahayana teaching into the doctrine of unbounded benevolence toward all creatures and of consequent merit laid up in the Paradise of the West. The belief in Bodhisattvas supplied Buddhism, for practical religion at least, with a pantheon of attractive personalities—personalities, besides, who were readily identified with the popular gods of any new country. For propaganda machine Buddhism had ready to hand the close-knit phalanx of the monastery. Well disciplined and sober, the monks were welcomed as teachers not merely of religion, but also of secular learning and cultural arts.

CEYLON

Indian legend makes Ceylon a kingdom of the Rakshas or demons, and tells how their king, Ravan, stole Sita the wife of the Aryan prince, Rama. Over a causeway built by the king of the monkeys, Hanuman, Rama leads his army, destroys the demons, and rescues Sita. Visible proof of historicity is pointed out in the remains of the causeway, namely, the chain of small islands laid across the straits (Adam's Bridge). Possibly there underlies this legend the fact of a prehistoric Aryan invasion of Ceylon. It was usual for the Indo-Aryans to refer to the indigenous peoples whom they conquered as Rakshas or demons which ethnological classification is rather vague. Competent ethnologists, however, have about agreed that Ceylon's aborigines are represented by the present-day Veddhas, a minority group on the island who live in caves and support themselves chiefly by fishing. Aryan culture from India's eastern seaports overran the aboriginal culture several centuries before our era. National consciousness may be said to date from the advent of Vijaya from Bengal, who in the fifth century B.C. established a dynasty in Ceylon. This national consciousness was strengthened in long wars with the Tamils of South India, who ambitioned control of the island.

Asoka asserts in his edicts that he sent Buddhist missionaries to Ceylon, while on his pillar at Sanchi is carved a splendid procession carrying a branch of the Bodh tree to some foreign land. This monumental evidence seems to confirm the elaborate Sinhalese tradition as to how the faith came to Ceylon, in some substantial points at least. In the Sinhalese *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa* (documents of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. respectively) we are told that at the Buddhist council of Pataliputra choice was made of Asoka's son, Mahinda, to evangelize Ceylon. Traveling by air the prince with six companion monks reached the southern island and in twenty-six days converted King Tissa, his court and people. Grateful Tissa dispatched an embassy to Asoka, asking for a branch of the Bodh tree and that Mahinda's sister, a nun, might be sent to receive Sinhalese ladies into the Order. Asoka complied; the sacred branch was planted and grew into a tree; under Tissa's patronage temples, monasteries, and relic towers were multiplied. Now, Tissa was in fact a contemporary and ally of the great Asoka and very probably did all he could to promote the Indian emperor's favorite religion. Buddhism, however, had probably entered Ceylon together with other Indian cultural influences before Tissa's day. That Asoka's own son and daughter led the Buddhist missionaries is almost as incredible as the details of the journey by air and the conversion within twenty-six days. We may well believe that Ceylon received a shoot from the Bodh tree, as it was common practice for such to be sent to missionary countries. Throughout Ceylon's history reference is made to this revered tree. Botanists tell us that the tree now growing in the Meghavana garden may well be a direct descendant from the original, as this species (the pipal) constantly sprouts fresh shoots from the old root.

Prodigious literary activity characterized Sinhalese monasticism. For several centuries the only means of passing on the Buddhist sacred lore from one generation of monks to the next was recitation by the teacher and memorizing by the pupils. Then in the first century B.C. writing on palm leaves came into use, and the industrious monks wrote out the whole of the vast sacred literature. Since the sacred language was Pali, which is greatly different from Sinhalese, supplementary works on grammar and Pali-Sinhalese dictionaries had to be added. There followed the interminable editions of commentaries on the sacred books, that the interpretations of dead masters might not perish and that living masters might display their erudition. Time was also found for the composition of a considerable body of original books, mostly still on religious subjects. In the smaller monasteries – housing perhaps merely four or five monks – which flourished in almost every village, the monks repaid the villagers for material support by teaching reading and writing to the children, with the result that the standard of literacy in Ceylon has always been high.

The Hinayanist interpretation has prevailed, though certain Mahayanist elements have crept in and though downright heresy has occasionally reared its head. Spiritual exercises in the monasteries have consistently aimed at the ataraxia which is the condition for arhatship and the prelude for nirvana. Practically, though, there is immense patience with human weakness, so that a monk who is unobjectionable in externals and who goes on happily meditating remains in good standing even though he be far from the goal of arhatship. In the rare case of certified arhatship, the fortunate monk receives the honors of sainthood on earth and his passing to nirvana is celebrated with magnificent obsequies. Sakyamuni's own status in the faith is ill defined, vacillating between that of a god and that of a supremely enlightened man. His biography has been embellished with a vast accretion of miraculous legends.

There is no sacrifice, and formal liturgical services are practically nonexistent. Devotion manifests itself in prayers and offerings at the relic shrines. Once a year (July to October) there is held a kind of popular mission. Around a gayly decorated platform the laity gathers to listen far into the night to relays of monks reciting sacred texts and explaining them. Close attention is not usual, and the people wander about, chat with friends, and chew the pleasantly narcotic betel nut. Within the monasteries religious observances follow the traditional pattern of exhortation, meditation, and confession of sins. "Ordination" (more properly solemn profession) in the Order was for centuries conferred on worthy candidates by each individual monastic chapter, but the custom now prevails of reserving this "laying on of hands" to the elders of several greater monasteries, to whom candidates from the other monasteries must present their credentials.

Two major relics of Sakyamuni are the boast of the Sinhalese church — the alms bowl which he used and one of his teeth. The latter, said to have been brought from India in the fourth century A.D., appears to be the tooth of some animal, though it would be perilous to say so to a believer. When the Portuguese established themselves in Ceylon in the sixteenth century, they seized the tooth from the shrine at Jaffna, carrying it off to Goa. A splendid ransom was offered by devout Sinhalese, but the Archbishop of Goa saw to it that the relic was burned in the market place. The Sinhalese, however, despite the ransom offered, now say that the Jaffna tooth was a spurious one and point to the true one in a shrine at Kandy. From the days of Fa-hsien, who describes it for the early fifth century, down to the present the procession of the tooth has roused the deepest religious emotions of the people. They throng the gaily decorated route while chanting monks escort the portable shrine and heralds proclaim interminably the miracles of the Buddha and his deeds of beneficence during his thousand incarnations.

From the time of its winning general acceptance (third century B.C.), Buddhism steadily strengthened its hold on the island. Vast remains of monasteries, temples, and elaborate relic towers testify to royal benefactions, while a considerable portion of the country was habitually "monk's land." Patriotism, too, helped the Samgha, for in the ceaseless resistance to Tamil raid and invasion Buddhism was recognized as a part of the national culture that was being defended. The Tamils, however, over a period of centuries, gradually infiltrated, as at a later date did the no less hated Mohammedans.[76] Catholicism has been an important and growing minority religion since Portuguese days (fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries), while Protestantism is of more recent date and not numerically strong. Curiously enough, Sinhalese Buddhism has organized a Y.M.B.A. and a Y.W.B.A. on models furnished by Protestant sectaries. Political unrest in the present century (stemming from causes analogous to those at work in India) has infected the usually placid Buddhist church. The manifestations have not been edifying, consisting of the vulgar militancy of intolerance and especially of intemperate abuse of the tenets of other faiths.[77]

BURMA

Burma's population, at least as far as historical times are understood, is of Chinese origin. In three great waves (the Talaings, Shans, and Burmese) people from western China moved down the Irrawady and Sittang rivers. The Talaings were pushed, to speak in general terms, into the deltas of these two rivers; the Shans, into the mountainous land to west and north; while the last to arrive, the Burmans, held the river valleys above Prome and Toungoo. With these three spheres of influence established, the history of the country, up to the coming of the British in the past century, resolved itself into a three-cornered fight for ascendancy. The whole country at different periods has fallen under the control of each one of the three groups, but the Burmans showed greater lasting power. When the British took over, it was a Burman dynasty which they ousted; the population was about 75 per cent Burman; the language was predominantly Burman.

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[76] The 1921 census gives 2,769,805 Buddhists; 982,073 Hindus; 302,532 Mohammedans; 443,000 Christians. In the last-named class there were 368,499 Roman Catholics.

[77] For the matter on Ceylon we are indebted chiefly to Sir Charles Eliot's *Hinduism and Buddhism* (London: E. Arnold, 1921), pp. 11–46.

Of Buddhism's history in the land the following stages are authenticated. Before our era, at a date and to a degree not definitely determinable, Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism passed into Burma over the trade routes. This same Buddhism of the north seems to have been propagated more systematically by missionaries of the time of Kanishka (second century A.D.), at which time the Mahayana had absorbed much Hinduism in tenet and practice. The Hinayana entered Lower Burma (in general, the Talaing region) probably in the first century A.D., coming from Ceylon and bringing copies of the canonical books in Pali. It prospered among the Talaings, especially after the preaching of the great Buddhaghosa, who arrived from Ceylon in the late fifth century. Ascendancy was won for the Hinayana through the conversion of the Burman king, Anawrahta, in 1057. Desiring to reform the religion of his subjects, he requested his contemporary royal "brother" of the Talaing kingdom to "loan him the loan of his religion," that is, to supply him with copies of the sacred Buddhist scriptures. The latter churlishly refused, so Anawrahta marched into Lower Burma and took not only the books, but many precious relics. Sending to Ceylon for still more books and for teachers, Anawrahta made his capital (Pagan) an illustrious center of Hinayana learning. So deep was the reverence for the Sinhalese form of Buddhism that in the thirteenth century a schism occurred on the question whether any "ordination" was valid except it be received in the Mahavihara monastery, then the great bulwark of orthodoxy in Ceylon. Peace was restored only when the king Dhammaceti ordered all monks reordained, not precisely in the famous Sinhalese monastery, but according to the authentic Mahavihara ritual.

From the time of Dhammaceti (1460–1491) the Hinayana has prevailed, and the two Hinayana churches of Burma and Ceylon have remained on terms of cordiality and mutual admiration. Except for a brief but fierce persecution by King Thohanwa in the sixteenth century Buddhism has enjoyed uninterrupted royal favor. Alompra, the founder of the dynasty bearing his name, was a great defender of the faith. His successor Bodopaya (1781–1819) established a hierarchy for the regulation of monasteries and of religious practices, appointing four "bishops" (*Sangharajas*) and elevating his chaplain, Nana, to the dignity of "archbishop."

The last worthy king of Burma was Mindo-min (1852–1877), who summoned an "ecumenical" council at Mandalay and in order to commemorate its work built there 450 pagodas, in each of which was a stone tablet inscribed with texts from the Buddhist scriptures. His successor, the futile Thibaw, labored under delusions of grandeur and played the dangerous game of tweaking the British lion's tail. He was deposed and Burma became a part of the empire. Much of the "fifth column" activity of Japanese agents prior to that country's conquest of Burma consisted in raising hopes of regaining independence by appealing to the Burmese as coreligionists of the Japanese. The very recently gained independence of Burma has not changed the religious situation substantially.

The Burmese monks are not unworthy of the esteem in which they are held nor of the generous support they receive, living sober lives and making themselves useful in literary labors and in teaching the three R's to children. Every town and large village maintains one or more monasteries, from which the monks issue each day to beg. Several daily services are held before the Buddha image, but usually the laity, though welcome, do not bother to attend these. A peculiar monastic regulation is that of three morning meals and none thereafter. Grades among the monks are the following: *sahin* or novice; *pyitshin* or professed; *pangyi* or professed of ten years' standing; *saya* or superior; *gaing-ok* or provincial; *thatabanabaing* or head of all the monasteries in the land (previously the archbishop mentioned above, now since the fall of the kings an elective office). The libraries of the monasteries are well stocked with manuscripts and with printed books, and for this reason as well as for the Burmese monks' reputation for scholarship, foreign monks come in crowds to study in Burma.

Travelers say that one can scarcely journey for an hour without seeing some religious edifice—monastery, temple, or pagoda. In fact architecture worthy of the name is almost exclusively religious, for the people's own housing is of the most modest and utilitarian type. The master thought of the architect is the pyramid with apex soaring as high as conditions permit. In building a monastery, for instance, the Burmese set out a quadrangle of pillars, upon which they lay a floor. Several rooms are then divided off—sleeping apartment, guest room, chapter hall, and chapel for the

Buddha statue—and walls and ceiling are added. As far as practical use goes, the monastery is now finished, for the rest of the construction is purely ornamental. Following the plan of a step pyramid, the builders superimpose five, six, or more stories of diminishing size, crowning finally the topmost with a slender spire. (If the library be extensive, a separate building is provided.) Striking changes are rung, however, on this pyramidal motif by tapering off abruptly or gradually, by softening or accentuating the effect of the jutting roofs, by fretwork and paint. There is not, as in Japan, a deliberate effort to make architecture harmonize with the natural features of the landscape, but somehow the Burmese secure a total effect of impressive, if rather gaudy grandeur. Chef-d'oeuvre of Burmese architecture is the Shwedagon pagoda at Rangoon. Here the great mass of masonry slopes gradually inward to the spire, three hundred and sixty-five feet above, giving the over-all impression of some giant's handbell.[78]

It is the ambition of almost every Burmese to build a pagoda, which fact accounts for the prodigious number of these structures. A modest initial expense suffices, as brick and stucco are acceptable building materials, and upkeep will amount to little more than periodic resurfacing. Obviously, the great majority of pagodas do not in any way approach the soaring magnificence of the Shwedagon; obviously, too, not many of them contain alleged first or second class relics of the Buddha or of saints. In most pagodas the venerated objects are, instead, books of the scriptures, models of very famous shrines, and Buddha images.

This pious desire to found a pagoda is only one instance of many which attest the vitality of the faith. There is much regularity in daily prayers, liberal almsgiving to the monks when they make their daily rounds, edifyingly large attendance at the monks' "sermons," and special delight in the pageantry of greater religious feast days. A Burmese does not consider himself quite a full-fledged human being until he has spent some time (even if only a week or ten days) in a monastery. This sojourn under community rule—regularly made during the sixteenth year—is not a postulancy or trial of vocation, but is thought to confer some element essential to integral humanity, literally "to make a man of him." Probably, the custom was introduced in Burmese Buddhism as a substitute for the puberty rites of a primitive civilization. The youth of the country, besides, falls under the formative influence of the monks in still other ways. During the sacred months of Was (July to October) the monasteries are crowded with children, whom parents voluntarily hand over to the monks for intellectual and religious training. Furthermore, the school system of the land (with the exception of a small number of mission schools) is monastic. Village children sit at the feet of monks to learn their alphabet and numbers, to memorize Buddhist texts, and to have their ideas of right and wrong formed according to Sakyamuni's code.

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[78] It is estimated that there are approximately 16,000 monasteries in Burma and that about three per cent of the male population are monks.

Withal, Burma is not quite the garden of the faith which the preceding remarks could lead one to imagine. For long centuries now the monks have enjoyed the favor of princes and people, but have not succeeded in making popular religion exclusively, perhaps not even predominantly, Buddhistic. Animistic beliefs are still vivid and widespread, while the amount and variety of the practice of magic is simply bewildering. Water sprites, hamadryads, spirits of the fell and goblins of the upper air are the beings to whom the people address themselves. Some of these spirits are benevolent and there is even a theoretic recognition of a supreme creator spirit (Chinun Way Shun), but no need is felt for propitiating these because of their constant good-natured beneficence. Most of the *nats* being malevolent or capricious, the poor native can avoid being "hexed" only by making constant prayers and offerings. A good catch of fish, for instance, is so readily hindered by the pyxie who controls that particular expanse of water. The *nats* have an aristocracy, the prepotent among them being known as the Thirty-Seven Nats, and rarely is a Burmese unable to name them all and in their proper order of precedence. The Thirty-Seven are also identified with the heroes of Burma's authentic and legendary history. Scientific religionists trace nat worship to three main causes: (*a*) pure animism, which attributes personality to every visible object; (*b*) the ancestor worship of the Chinese, which postulates that the spirits of the dead are busy with the concerns of the living; (*c*) the cult of the Bodhisattvas of Indian Buddhism.

Magic in all its forms abounds, as means to keep the dangerous spirit world in control. To guard a town from molestation by the nats, a sure protection is to slay a human victim and inter him within the precincts. His spirit is thus constituted warden of the place and will jealously resist intrusion by other spirits. Even such enlightened rulers and good Buddhists as the founder of the Alompra Dynasty and the great Mindo-min thought it necessary to honor this custom when they built respectively Rangoon (1755) and Mandalay (1857), the former slaying a Talaing princess and the latter a pregnant woman. British officials, of course, were not able to see eye to eye with the Burmese on the expediency of such a method of watch and ward, so the practice has been in abeyance for the past half century. However, the remote and savage Was still send out head-hunting parties in early spring, for by this time the village guardian of the past year is thought to have grown exhausted in his conflicts with the nats and fresh blood is needed. It is desirable to waylay a stranger, because his spirit will not know his way around and will stick close to the place where the body is interred and the skull set up.

Popular psychology holds that the human soul during sleep and during other states of unconsciousness has gone A.W.O.L. While thus errant, it is easy prey for the nats, who delight in sending it to its bodily tenement loaded with disease germs or other souvenirs. Resultant sickness must be exorcised either by such home remedies as severely beating the patient or by hiring a professional exorcist. The latter, after inquiring about the horoscope and other pertinent details of the sick man's case history, will sacrifice to the nat who has caused the trouble, recite magical formulae, prescribe a diet, and prepare a potion from herbs and other medicaments. Of utmost importance, not only in sickness but also in marriages and business, is the individual's horoscope. An expert — usually a wise man of the Shan tribe — is paid to calculate it and incorporate it in a number of jingle verses. There is also a calendar published which marks lucky and unlucky days — lucky and unlucky either *ex toto genere suo* or only relatively to certain transactions, such as taking a wife or cattle buying.

Divination is also widely practiced. For instance, the following method is considered efficacious in determining the chances of success in an enterprise that one has in mind. A leg bone of a fowl is dried, pierced with holes, and in the holes slivers of bamboo are inserted. You may safely undertake the enterprise if a majority of the slivers then incline toward the right: the greater the majority, the better your chance of success.

THAILAND

When in the thirteenth century Kubilai Khan burst into the Yunnan Province of China, fear of his Mongol cavalry drove the unwarlike population southward. As the province became a battleground between the Mongols and the Chinese armies sent thither by the emperor, there followed still more migrations of noncombatants. Most of these refugees, who go by the name of *Thais* ("free men"), settled in the kingdom of Cambodia. Their political fortunes varied, as they acknowledged sometimes the sovereignty of Cambodia, sometimes that of China, and sometimes had small principalities of their own. Eventually, though, in the early sixteenth century, their descendants conquered central Cambodia down to the seacoast and established their own kingdom of Siam (present-day Thailand) and maintained their independence against the Cambodians on the east and the Burmese on the west. The Siamese have had a number of exceptionally able kings: Phra Naret (1558–1593), who signally defeated Burmese and Cambodians; Phra Narai (1655–1670), who negotiated trade treaties and alliances with European powers; Mongkut (1851–1868) and his son and grandson, under whom Thailand made notable progress toward modernization. Both French and English generously abetted this progress, but showed that their motives were not wholly altruistic when they helped themselves to generous slices of Thai territory.

The Thais, as soon as they emerge into history, are Buddhists, probably were such before they left China. Cambodia itself, where they settled, had been definitely Buddhist, though the faith there was under a cloud due to an unfavorable court party. Burma, nearest neighbor, was Buddhist. A Thai prince (of Sakothai near the Burmese border) of the early fourteenth century has recorded in an inscription that his people were devoutly Buddhist, observing the sacred season of Vassa (July–October), celebrating Sakyamuni's birthday with processions, supplicating devas and spirits for prosperity. The prince mentions the Forest Monastery near his capital, pagodas, relics, and images.

As early as 1361 Suryavamsa Rama claims the title of king and has built his capital at Ayuthia within one hundred miles of the southern sea. His inscriptions tell of the arrival from Ceylon of a Samgharajah learned in the Law, and from India of a cutting of the Bodh tree and of relics. So devout was Suryavamsa Rama that he abdicated and entered a monastery to pursue perfection, but when the government in consequence began to disintegrate he resumed his royal authority. Further inscriptions of his regnal years attest both that the Hinayanist Pali Canon was the accepted scripture and that certain Mahayanist doctrines (the countless number of Buddhas, the transference of one person's merit to others) were believed.

Thailand, no less than Burma, has always turned to Ceylon as the pure fount of orthodoxy, with the result that the Buddhism of the three countries exhibits only superficial differences. The scriptures have been kept intact by periodical comparison, while the "evolution of dogma" has been along parallel lines due to regular interchange of teachers and students. After religion had been disorganized by the incursion of the Burmese (1560 and 1770), almost the first care of the Thai princes who drove out the invaders and founded new dynasties was to send to Ceylon for able monks to reorganize Thai monasticism and religion in general. The latest dynasty (founded 1782) has been consistently occupied with modernization of the country's whole economy upon European models and with purification of religion on scriptural and traditional models.

A religious establishment, called a *wat,* has several interesting features. At the main entrance stand grotesque figures of guardian spirits: they may be animal or human; at the Wat Pho in Bangkok they are grotesque men crowned with hats like those worn by the early Portuguese. Inside the enclosure are several courts, the first of them surrounded by a colonnade in which are set statues of Buddha's eighty disciples. Around the other courts are grouped various buildings. There are apartments for the monks, bell towers, halls for preaching, image houses, pavillions over ablution tanks, or pagodas built over some special relic like "Buddha's footprint." Most important building in the whole *wat* is the *bot* (major shrine).

Eight stones, shaped like leaves of the Bodh tree, mark off a sacred precinct about it. Architecturally, it is a step pyramid after the Burmese fashion. Inside is a large room whose walls are adorned with scenes from Buddha's life. Object of worship is an image of him seated upon a pyramid whose sides are lavishly covered with other carvings. The Siamese Buddha has a flame rising from his head; he wears red robes and has hands and face of gold.

Monks, of whom there are well over sixty thousand in Thailand, are the regular schoolmasters for Thai youngsters. Besides, they engage in medical practice, though they mingle with it much nonsense of charms and faith healing. Begging is obligatory on all during the season of Vassa (July–October), but at other times there is only a little token begging performed, to keep up monastic tradition. Having other sources of supply, the monks do not usually eat what they collect on their rounds, so it is to be presumed that the community cat fares well. Spiritual exercises are of the same type as in Ceylon and Burma, namely meditations aiming progressively at the distinctively Buddhist perfection of *ataraxia*. The crown exercises control over monasteries through an "archbishop" and "bishops" who are royal appointees.

Every layman is expected to spend at least two months in a monastery, to secure benefits akin to those sought by the similar observance among the Burmese. The rainy season rates as a kind of Lent, when all feel called to a stricter observance of religious devoirs. In all his religious observances the Thai is said to be marked by a spirit of cheerfulness, even of gaiety. He delights in the pageantry of festival days, blending his religious emotions with much eating and drinking, and with his favorite diversion of gambling. At the sixth full moon of the year begins a three-day festival of Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and entrance into nirvana. Illuminations and processions, feasting and gambling then satisfy the natural man, but the Thais also diligently attend the monks' sermons, fill their begging bowls with delicacies, and are liberal in their alms to the poor. On New Year's Day the temples are crowded and Buddha's images are banked with flowers after having been ceremonially bathed. The wealthy present new robes to the monks and entertain them with splendid banquets. Since the demons have to be frightened off during the coming year, sentinels are posted and volleys of musketry are fired.

Popular religion has its *phis,* who are about the same as Burma's nats. A certain amount of Hinduism remains, probably as a survival of the once strong Hindu element in Cambodia. There is, for instance, a Brahmin establishment with its own temple. These worthies at court functions hold as honorable a position as do the Buddhist monks. One of their functions is to give Sanskrit names to princes, high officials, towns, temples, palaces, and even to the sacred white elephants. They prepare the drink which government officials must imbibe on New Year's Day as a renewal of their pledge of loyalty. To them is reserved the right to compute lucky and unlucky days, to read horoscopes, to practice various kinds of sorcery. The people insist on observing several Hindu festivals, such as the Breaking of the Plowing Ground and the Swinging Festival.

ISLAM

34. Islam Appraised by Its Own and by Western Minds

"VERILY the true religion in the sight of God is Islam."[1] For thirteen hundred years this faith has been at work shaping the culture of the lands which lie between Europe's southern and southeastern gates and the far south and east. The conquest of these lands by Omar and his successors has proved to be in the truest sense permanent, for the Koranic beliefs and institutions of the conquerors were enduringly engrafted on the conquered. From the Bosporus to the Indus, not only religion proper but the social order and the laws are founded upon the teaching of the Koran and the *Sonna* (traditional collection of the sayings and actions of Mohammed). The stagnation into which so many of these lands of Moslem culture have sunk generates in western minds a disposition to disparage Islam, and all it stands for, quite indiscriminately. Yet in the long history of the caliphs there have been periods when Europe's princes might profitably have gone to school at Bagdad or Granada to learn princely virtue and just and wise administration. Nor, as abundant monuments attest, has Islamic culture proved sterile in science, the arts, and literature. Finally, the firm faith of the Mohammedan multitudes deserves perennial admiration from a western world infected not lightly with religious doubt and skepticism. It is the same faith that was the driving force of Moslem conquest and that was strong enough to win a great section of the world and for four hundred years to imperil Europe itself. Islam was prevented from overwhelming Christian civilization only by the solicitude of the Roman Pontiffs and the all-out effort of chivalry in the persons of such knights as Godfrey and Richard, Mark Antony Colonna and Gonsalvo de Cordova.

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[1] *Al Koran*, transl. by George Sale (Philadelphia: J. W. Moore, 1853), p. 37. This translation will be quoted throughout these pages.

The name which Mohammed himself gave to his religion was Islam. He also occasionally referred to his disciples as Moslems,[2] though he preferred the term "true believers." Islam and Moslem derive from the Arabic word *salama* (to submit), and mean respectively "submission" and "one who submits." God is, of course, the One to whom the submission is rendered, and it is chiefly twofold according to the text of the Koran. Faith in the revelation of His prophet Mohammed is one form of submission.[3] Another is patience or resignation amid all the vicissitudes of life.[4]

Mohammed professed a revelation which was to complete and consummate all previous revelations. Strong nationalist though he was, and confined though his personal efforts were to the Arabian peninsula, he regarded himself as the founder of a universal religion. Throughout the Koran those who disbelieve in its teaching are menaced with the terrors of the last judgment which is to follow the general resurrection.[5] Nor have Moslems ever abandoned this claim to universality for their faith. Holy war, to rid the earth of infidels who refuse conversion and hinder the preaching of the "true religion," has always been deemed a duty. Again, though it may be remarked in general that very many conversions to Islam have been influenced by the desire to escape civil disabilities under Moslem rule or by fear, others in no small numbers must be attributed to sincere and zealous proselytizing on the part of the "true believers." These same believers in our own day are not oppressed with any sense of inferiority in the face of the Christian civilization of western lands, but defend the Islamic as the better way. Thus a recent writer,[6] offering the Koranic doctrines of monotheism and brotherly love as panaceas for world ills, appeals to the "miracle" of the unification of so many races under Moslem rule. He further thinks that the prophet has the solution of economic maladjustments in his legislation on private property and almsgiving, the solution of marital and sex problems in his permission of four legal wives and of easy divorce. In the estimate of still another recent apologete: "Regarding man's duties towards himself and his fellow beings Islam is probably more emphatic and certainly more explicit than any older system (Christianity and Judaism not excluded). It denounces self-indulgence, insists upon self-discipline, and makes self-restraint a part of the religious law."[7]

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[2] "We believe therein; it is certainly the truth from our Lord: verily we were Moslems before this." "Such are the Moslems described to be: that the infidels may swell with indignation at them." *Op. cit.*, pp. 321, 417.

[3] "If they dispute with thee (Mohammed), say: I have resigned myself to God, and he who followeth me doth the same." *Ibid.*, p. 37.

[4] "Who speaketh better than he who inviteth unto God, and worketh righteousness, and sayeth: I am a Moslem? Good and evil shall not be held equal. Turn away evil with that which is better; and behold, the man between whom and thyself there was enmity shall become, as it were, thy warmest friend: but none shall attain to this perfection except they who are patient." *Ibid.*, p. 391.

[5] "Surely, they who believe not and die in their unbelief, upon them shall be the curse of God, and of the angels, and of all men; they shall remain under it forever; their punishment shall not be alleviated, neither shall they be regarded." *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Christian appraisements of the religious movement started by Arabia's most famous son naturally dissent from such roseate views. Formal controversy against the supernatural claims of Islam occupied the Schoolmen of medieval Europe and has left a splendid monument in the *Summa contra Gentiles* of St. Thomas. The apologetic forces of the Church have long since been transferred to other fronts, leaving polemics to missionaries who struggle against disheartening odds to win over a very few from Mohammed to Christ. Of Islam as a religio-social force there are many interesting estimates from the pens of western writers. Of the prophet Gibbon writes:

> From his earlier youth Mahomet was addicted to religious contemplation; each year during the month of Ramadan he withdrew from the world and from the arms of Cadijah: in the cave of Hera, three miles from Mecca, he consulted the spirit of fraud or enthusiasm whose abode is not in the heavens, but in the mind of the prophet. The faith which, under the name of Islam, he preached to his family and nation, is compounded of an eternal truth and a necessary fiction, that there is only one God, and that Mahomet is the apostle of God.[8]

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[6] M. Muhammad Ali in *The Religion of Islam* (Lahore: Ripton Press, 1936), Chap. 1.

[7] Ameer Ali Syed in *Islam* (London: Constable & Co., 1914), p. 20.

[8] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* Chap. L, p. 211; ed. Bradley Co., N. Y.

On Moslem culture he makes the following strictures:

> But the Moslems deprived themselves of the principal benefits of a familiar intercourse with Greece and Rome — the knowledge of antiquity, the purity of taste, and the freedom of thought. . . . The mythology of Homer would have provoked the abhorrence of those stern fanatics: they possessed in lazy ignorance the colonies of the Macedonians and the provinces of Carthage and Rome. The heroes of Plutarch and Livy were buried in oblivion; and the history of the world before Mahomet was reduced to a short legend of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the Persian kings. . . . The philosophers of Athens and Rome enjoyed the blessings, and asserted the rights, of civil and religious freedom. Their moral and political writings might have gradually unlocked the fetters of eastern despotism, diffused a liberal spirit of inquiry and toleration, and encouraged the Arabian sages to suspect that their caliph was a tyrant and their prophet an impostor. The instinct of superstition was alarmed by the introduction even of the abstract sciences; and the more rigid doctors of the law condemned the rash and pernicious curiosity of Almamon. To the thirst of martyrdom, the vision of paradise, and the belief of predestination, we must ascribe the invincible enthusiasm of the prince and people.[9]

Sale, the learned translator of the Koran, puts in a plea for Mohammed, while frankly admitting that his revelation was an imposture:

> Mohammed has given a new system of religion, which has had still greater success than the arms of his followers, and to establish this religion made use of an imposture; and on this account it is supposed that he must of necessity have been a most abandoned villain, and his memory is become infamous. But as Mohammed gave his Arabs the best religion he could, as well as the best laws, preferable at least to those of the ancient pagan lawgivers, I confess I cannot see why he deserves not equal respect, though not with Moses or Jesus Christ, whose laws came really from heaven, yet with Minos or Numa, notwithstanding the distinction of a learned writer who seems to think it a greater crime to make use of an imposture to set up a new religion, founded on the acknowledgement of one true God, and to destroy idolatry than to use the same means to gain reception to rules and regulations for the more orderly practice of heathenism already established.[10]

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[9] *Ibid.*, Chap. LII, pp. 443, 444.

[10] Sale, in dedication of the translation quoted above, p. IV.

In his wonted scintillating phrases Carlyle sketches the awakening of Arabia:

> To the Arab nation Islam was as a birth from darkness into light; Arabia first became alive by means of it. A poor shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in its deserts since the creation of the world: a Hero Prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe: see, the unnoticed becomes world-notable, the small has grown world-great; within one century afterwards Arabia is at Granada on this hand, at Delhi on that . . . glancing in valor and splendor and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world. Belief is great, life-giving. The history of a nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great, as soon as it believes. These Arabs, the man Mahomet, and that one century – is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand; but lo, the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Granada![11]

A criticism more penetrating and less favorable is that of Fr. Edmund Power, S.J.

> Islam's spirit, fundamentally different from that of Christianity, is based upon a false conception of God. He is not a father, but a master, merciful indeed but, like an eastern despot, distributing arbitrarily rewards and punishments. . . . Its corrupt morals appear, for instance, in the encouragement of polygamy, divorce, and slavery in its worst form. It has absurd dogmas, mysteries not transcending human understanding like the Trinity and the Incarnation, but directly contradicting it like the impeccability of Mohammed and the divinity of the Koran. With all these faults it claims to be the perfection of revelation, absolutely superior to all other religions. . . . The more educated Moslems are, the less faithful they become to their religion, for Islam is and must be the religion of the poor and ignorant, who carry out its more difficult precepts with edifying exactitude. Requiring a blind faith and satisfying natural religious needs without forbidding to gratify the baser passions, it is well adapted to uncivilized races, as were to a great extent the Arabs for whom it was originally intended, and as are the African negroes among whom alone it makes converts today.[12]

[11] *Heroes and Hero Worship* (London: Ward & Lock, 1890), pp. 101, 102.
[12] C.T.S., *History of Religions*, 1910, Vol. IV, pp. 31, 32.

Of contemporary Islam the orientalist, Fr. H. Lammens, S.J., writes:

> Islam has arrived at the cross-roads. With the exception of the old conservatives, all Muslims are conscious of the urgent need to carry out reforms and come to terms with modern progress. But each party envisages the transformation in its own way. On one point only are all instinctively agreed; on no condition will they approximate to Christian civilization. To the orthodox progressivists reform is identified with a Muslim renaissance to which western science will serve solely as a stimulus. They will merely borrow from Europe technique and material progress, since Islam contains in itself all the elements necessary to its own regeneration. Others confine their aspirations toward reform to commercial development, and this tendency has produced in Islam types unknown a quarter of a century ago: big manufacturers, shipowners, bankers and stockbrokers.[13]

Fr. Lammens further notes in the same chapter how the portentous events of the last two decades have shaken the Moslem world. The U.S.S.R. "has succeeded in constituting a whole gamut of small laicized and secularized states, among which every day it strengthens national consciousness and which it awakens to modern life at the expense of the Islamic ideal." Mustapha Kemal and his successors have done and are doing the same for Turkey and have struck what may be considered a more fatal blow in their formal deposition of the Commander of the Faithful. The fair dream of Pan-Arabism conjured up by Colonel Lawrence for Feisal and Ali — a dream whose materialization would have made Islam a great world power — vanished in the cool daylight of British and French postwar diplomacy, leaving Mohammed's people more hopelessly divided than before. Fr. Lammens in face of these developments refuses to don the prophet's mantle and vaticinate anent Islam's future. Fr. Powers is more assured and foredooms to failure all future attempts to unite the "true believers" for political action.[14]

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[13] H. Lammens, S.J., in *Islam, Beliefs and Institutions* (London: Methuen & Co., 1929), p. 224.

[14] E. Powers, S.J., in C.T.S., *History of Religions,* Vol. IV, p. 32.

35. Early Arabia

THE great peninsula where Islam was first preached hangs, in shape like an axhead, from the southwestern corner of Asia. The Red Sea and the Persian Gulf respectively are its western and northeastern boundaries, while the Indian Ocean washes its southern and southeastern shores. Of the interior of this vast country classical literature and history knew but little. The *Arabia Petraea* of the Romans embraced only a small northwestern fragment of the peninsula; their *Arabia Deserta,* the northern part of the great desert plateau. Since trade had acquainted them with the fertile western coast, they erroneously concluded from the precious luxury articles on sale there that the back country was marvelously rich, and so into literature passed the misnomer *Arabia Felix.* Apart from the coastal provinces (especially southern Yemen), however, Arabia is an unhospitable land of rocks and sand and sparse vegetation. Irregular rains indeed make the desert flourish briefly and miraculously, and the succulent herbage springs up overnight to fill out to sleekness the sagging skins of the Bedouins' sheep and camels.

Herodotus narrates several curious stories about the Arabs. Their country, he says, is infested with winged serpents and these guard the trees which bear frankincense and must be smoked out by stirax fumes before the precious product can be gathered. Cassia grows in shallow lakes similarly guarded by exceedingly fierce bats, whom the Arabs outwit by clothing themselves in thick animal hides. Cinnamon bark is brought by huge birds from some unknown place to build nests in Arabia high up on inaccessible cliffs. The ingenious Arabs place at the foot of the cliffs great joints of meat, which the birds carry to the nests, only to have their weight break the nests and send the cinnamon bark clattering down to the waiting Arabs. Another fine perfume is gathered from the beards of goats. The Arabian sheep are remarkable in this, that they bear tails either of a cubit in breadth or of three cubits in length; for the latter the shepherds supply individual wooden cradles to hold up the caudal appendage lest it drag and fester.[15]

The provenance of these stories is probably the same as that of the story about the golden anthills of India piled up by ants larger than foxes. Egyptians and coastal Arabians controlled the trade routes to the far east, and understandably wished to keep trade secrets to themselves. Hence they regaled Greek curiosity with apocryphal accounts of how and where the east's precious merchandise was obtained. Of authentic information about the great peninsula and its inhabitants but little can be found in Greek and Roman authors. Egyptian, Babylonian, and Persian royal annals know them as restless neighbors seeking alleviation of their chronic poverty in lightning raids on border settlements and eluding pursuit in their desert fastnesses. Their staple means of livelihood was their flocks of sheep and herds of camels, which were kept constantly on the move by the meagerness of the pasture. "He hath likewise," says Mohammed, "created the cattle for you; from them ye have wherewith to keep yourselves warm and other advantages; and of them do ye also eat."[16] The camel, he further says, is an especial proof of divine providence. "Do they not consider the camels, how they are created; and the heaven, how it is raised; and the earth, how it is extended?"[17] The camel, when alive, furnished the Arab with a mount superior in speed and endurance to the best horse; when slain, it bestowed on him the riches of its flesh, hide, and hair. Forced by the harshness of his fatherland to live the hard way, the Arab developed a dried-out, muscular physique. Living a nomad's life under the loosest of tribal authority, he became a fierce individualist. Revenge with him was nearly a fetish, while blood feuds were handed down from generation to generation. The right to plunder others besides one's own tribesmen was conditioned only by the prospects' ability to defend their property.

A fair picture of pre-Islamic religion may be drawn from incidental classical references and from the fuller information available in the Koran. It was a religion of many gods, who may be broadly classified racially as Semitic and functionally as astral. For them few myths were spun, nor were the Arabs interested in giving to their beliefs any consistency and articulation through the constructions of a speculative theology. The etymology of their word for "piety" may afford some clue to their religious psychology. *Ittaqa,* the word for "to be pious," means etymologically "to be on guard against" (*tuqa*—piety; *taqi*—pious). Among pagans the gods are often more dreaded than reverenced, are believed to be capricious and jealous. Even Mohammed, for all his preaching of divine mercy, could not free his mind of the idea that Allah predestined men to good or ill quite according to whim, that he found a barbarous pleasure in orgies of vengefulness.

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[15] *Herodotus,* Bk. III, nn. 107–113.

[16] Sale's translation, p. 214.

[17] *Ibid.,* p. 488.

The sun, so prominent in Egyptian and Babylonian cult, was worshiped also in Arabia under the name *Shams.* Commonly the sun was thought of as a goddess, contrary to Egyptian and Babylonian usage. "The rising one" and "the Burner" are Arabian cult epithets applied to this divinity. The Greeks tell us that the Arabians worshiped Helios and Dousarios, the latter name seeming to have been originally a place name taken from some famous center of sun worship. St. Epiphanius is authority for the statement that the great festival of Dousarios occurred on December 25, which about coincides with the winter solstice.

In a torrid clime, such as theirs was, it is easy to understand why the Arabs revered the fearful power of the sun and made a divinity of it. For another reason the Pleiades came in for divine honors, since the appearance of the constellation of the Sisters signalized the opening of the rainy season, such as it was. No doubt, the idea was to secure plentiful rain through propitiation of these heavenly patronesses. For the worship of Sirius (the Dog Star) we seem to have the testimony of the Koran: "He is the Lord of the Dog Star."[18] Sirius was famed among the Egyptians, who celebrated the great Sothic Festival when simultaneously each year he appeared as daystar and the Nile began to rise. Among the Romans he had a sinister reputation because his rising as daystar ushered in the dreaded heat of the *Dies Caniculares.* Sirius' rising in Arabia synchronized with the worst of the summer heat, so that we may probably conjecture that religious superstition deemed him responsible for it and sought to propitiate his wrath.

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[18] *Ibid.,* Chap. LIII, p. 429; also his Preliminary Discourse, pp. 12, 13. There is a tradition that Mohammed's grandfather tried to convert his tribe to the worship of Sirius alone.

Travelers report that the planet Venus is so lustrous in the Arabian sky that it casts a shadow. Looked on as a goddess and named *al Uzza* ("the mighty one"), Venus is mentioned in all ancient accounts as the recipient of an extensive cult. Tradition affirms that prior to his "revelations" Mohammed himself offered sacrifice to her. Herodotus reports that Venus was known to the Arabians as Alitta and that the most solemn oaths were taken in her name and that of Bacchus (perhaps *al Shams* or the sun-god).[19] As late as the sixth century of our era there is record that the Arab king of Hira sacrificed to her the son of a rival Christian king, as well as a whole community of captive Christian nuns. In the Koran (Chap. LIII, p. 427, of Sale's translation) we read: "What think ye of Allat, Al Uzza, and Manah, that other third goddess? Have ye male children, and God female?" The Arabian Venus, then, was one of the three daughters whom the Meccans attributed to Allah and against whom "the prophet" most vehemently inveighed. (The other two daughters are known only by name, Allat meaning "the goddess" and Manah "height" or "high place." There are some reasons for surmising that Allat was the sun-goddess,[20] while it is intriguing to speculate that the name "high place" suggests a connection with the worship on the "high places" against which the Hebrew prophets preached.)

In Chapter LXXI of the Koran Mohammed names five more divine worthies as being the idols of the antediluvians to whom Noah preached. They were still worshiped by Mohammed's contemporaries—Wadd, Sawa, Yaghuth, Yauk, and Nasr. Mohammedan commentators describe their respective idols as having the forms of a man, a woman, a lion, a horse, and an eagle. Little else is known about them, except that Wadd was supposed to be the heavens, and that Yauk had been supposedly an ancient hero who was deified. The same Mohammedan commentators aver that in the environs of Mecca alone there were 360 idols corresponding to the number of days in the (Arabian) year. To use the term "idol," however, without qualification would be misleading. Frequently, and indeed nearly as a rule, the "idol" had neither human nor animal form. Furthermore, from the scarcity of information that has survived as to *personalized* divinities of the Arabs, from the seemingly countless number of stones which were worshiped, one is urged to the conclusion that we have here a genuine fetishism.

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[19] Herodotus, Bk. I, Chap. 131; Bk. III, Chap. 8.

[20] Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* Vol. I, art. "Arabs."

As a source of Mohammed's later doctrine of predestination, the Arab's concept of a divine (or, more properly, a superdivine) power determining the course of events ineluctably must be noted. The Apportioner was thought of as driving men to success or to doom, lying in ambush for them, handing them the cup of death. This Arabian counterpart of the Greek Moira cannot be said to have received worship, any more than Moira received it among the Greeks. Nor does it appear that fate was thought of as a personal being.

The Thousand and one Nights give testimony to the belief in demons which Islam adopted from the older religion. The desert was haunted by the Jinn (this being the plural form of *Jinni*). Invisible and incalculably malevolent, they frightened the herds away from water holes by menacing cries; entered into the bodies of serpents and scorpions to plague man and beast, or into the bodies of men to drive them mad. They whisked off men and women to their desert dens to work their will on them. There was a female of the species, and Jinn multiplied by procreation, but happily were mortal. No cult properly so called was directed to them, though on certain occasions attempts were made to placate them. Thus, when an Arab began to build a house, he might make some offering to the Jinn, to forfend sabotage; or, if overtaken by night in an especially haunted locality, he had ready a formula for entreating the head jinni of the neighborhood to call off his subordinates.[21] Mohammed incorporated this old Arabian demonology into his teaching, but professed a special revelation to the effect that the Jinn could be saved if they accepted the Koran and became true believers. The chapter containing this revelation is curious enough to call for a few quotations. "Say, it hath been revealed unto me that a company of genii attentively heard me reading the Koran, and said: Verily we have heard an excellent discourse, which directeth unto the right institution;

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[21] Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* Vol. I, art. "Arabs," p. 670. Also, *The Koran,* Sales transl., Chap. LXXII, p. 467.

wherefore we believe therein, and we will by no means associate any other with our Lord. . . . When the servant of God stood up to invoke Him, it wanted but little but that the genii had pressed on him in crowds to hear him rehearse the Koran."[22] From another chapter we learn that these Jinn were so zealous for their faith that they became missionaries to the Jinn world, for "they returned to their people, preaching what they had heard. . . . They said: Our people, obey God's preacher and believe in Him, that He may forgive you your sins and may deliver you from a painful punishment."[23]

Not many years prior to Mohammed's own era, one figure began to stand out in this crowd of gods and spirits. From very early times the term *Allah* (variant, *Hallah*) is used for god, but its use for "the god" (transcendently, henotheistically, to signify the great god) is late. For Mohammed's contemporaries Allah was the god of the quasi pan-Arabic holy place of Mecca. There he was worshiped along with three goddesses (the "daughters" mentioned above), but these latter were definitely subordinate. It is clear from the polemics of the Koran that the rights of Allah as Supreme Being were admitted in theory and that only superstitious affection for immemorial idols inhibited the Arabs from according him due submission. For, first, throughout his tireless arguments with his adversaries the prophet presumes that they grant as first principles: Allah created and conserves all things; Allah reads all hearts; Allah is the one to whom men must account for their conduct. Second, in numerous specific passages Mohammed contrasts the obliquity of their conduct with the correctness of their knowledge of Allah as the supreme one. "When evil befalleth a man, he prayeth unto us lying on his side, or sitting, or standing: but when we deliver him from his affliction he continueth his former course of life, as though he had not called upon us to defend him."[24] "They worship besides God, that which can neither hurt them nor profit them, and they say: these are our intercessors with God."[25] "The Koreish (Mohammed's own tribe) swore by God, with a most solemn oath, that if a preacher had come unto them, they would surely have been more willingly directed than any nation: but now a preacher has come unto them, it hath only increased in them their aversion from the truth."[26] Carlyle's fine word painting of the "deep-hearted son of the wilderness" bursting in upon the idolaters of Mecca to trumpet forth a new and strange revelation: "Allah akbar"—this is splendidly Carlylean rhetoric, but bad history of religions. Allah for many decades had been supreme at Mecca.

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[22] *Koran*, Chap. LXXII, pp. 467, 468.

[23] *Ibid.*, Chap. XLVI, p. 409.

[24] *Ibid.*, Chap. X, p. 167.

[25] *Ibid.*

Whence arose so relatively correct an idea of God among pagans? From Jewish and Christian influence. For it must be recalled that Mohammed lived in the late sixth and early seventh centuries of our era. Though the Jews in Arabia had studiously avoided the vagabond and unprofitable life of the Bedouin, they were established in trade in the oases, regularly set up their booths at the annual fair in Mecca and constituted through their control of industry and commerce the ruling class in Medina. To the south in Yemen there was even founded a Jewish kingdom. Old Testament lore, as the Koran abundantly attests, was familiar to the Arabs through these contacts. Furthermore, the Arabs prided themselves on an apocryphal genealogy which connected them with the patriarchal line through Hagar's son, Ishmael. That Mohammed's aversion to representing Allah by any graven image derived from the similar Jewish aversion cannot be questioned. When he fled to Medina, he expected to find allies in the Jews precisely because he taught as they did on monotheism, an expectation of which they quickly disabused him.

The Christians of Arabia in the sixth century were Nestorians and Monophysites, though in Yemen there seem to have been communities in union with Rome.[27] Toward them Mohammed was kindlier inclined than toward the Jews, whose tighter organization and influence was speedily turned against his religious movement. He knew the life of Christ in a somewhat apocryphal version and was acquainted with the principal Christian doctrines, though here again he grossly misunderstood in some matters. One tradition says that in younger days he had, in the course of a business journey to Syria, been instructed by a Syrian monk. However that may be, he had plenty of opportunities to meet Christians of a sort in his own homeland. As will be seen later, he acknowledged Christ (as also Moses) as a true and great prophet and admitted both Old and New Testament to be inspired writings. On his views on Jews and Christians respectively one passage may be cited: "Thou shalt surely find the most violent of all men in enmity against the true believers to be the Jews and the idolaters: and thou shalt surely find those among them to be the most inclinable to entertain friendship for the true believers, who say: We are Christians. This cometh to pass because there are priests and monks among them, and because they are not elated with pride. And when they hear that which has been sent down to the apostle (namely Mohammed), thou shalt see their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth which they perceive therein, saying: O Lord, we believe."[28]

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[26] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXXV, p. 360.

[27] Cf. Lammens, *op. cit.*, p. 22. Also Budge, *History of Ethiopia* (Methuen, 1928), Vol. I, p. 260.

Two other monotheistic groups were known to the Arabs, and more significantly to Mohammed. By the end of the fourth century A.D. a monotheistic cult is found in Saba (in southern Arabia). These Sabeans believed in grace, forgiveness of sins, and life after death; they confessed their sins and practiced austerities.[29] The other group were the Hanifs, found chiefly in central Arabia. Significantly enough, leading citizens of the three cities most familiar to Mohammed—Mecca, Medina, Taif—had sought in Hanifism a *via media* between the crudities of Arab paganism on the one hand and the doctrines of Judaism or Christianity on the other. The Hanifs were strict monotheists, believers in eternal life, and ascetics in so far as they abstained from wine. What was true and commendable in Sabaism and Hanifism must doubtless be attributed to Jewish and Christian influence.

No elaborate liturgy had developed in their cult of the gods. Even temples were rare, and those that did exist were of the simplest construction. Often the idol or sacred stone stood in the open with a circle of stones to mark off an enclosure of holy ground. Worshipers made the circuit of the temple or enclosure in procession, seemingly working up their emotions to the pitch of frenzy. Mohammed accuses them of throwing off their clothes, of whistling and clapping their hands.[30] Private and public prayers were recited standing before the stone or image. Especially meritorious and especially efficacious in moving the gods to munificence were sacrifices of camels, sheep, and goats. The sacrificial ritual was extremely simple, for the victim was slain, some of its blood poured on the idol or stone, and finally its flesh cooked and banqueted on by the sacrificer and his guests. One of the better passages of the Koran directs that the needy are to be included among the guests.[31] Burnt offerings do not seem to have been customary, while records are very scarce of the libations poured out to the gods which we commonly find in other religions. A curious practice is noted in the worship of sacred trees, upon which were hung votive offerings of weapons and clothing. Custody of the temples, such as they were, and ministration in them pertained to certain families, from whom therefore the *kahin* or priests came. However, it is certain that the kahin were regarded neither singularly sacred *ratione muneris* nor as teachers of religious doctrine nor as guides in morals. It was rather to poets, soothsayers, and magicians that the pagan Arabs turned when they wished to get in touch with the other world, for upon these the spirit of the gods was supposed to have descended to endow them with occult knowledge and power. Much store, too, was set by divination through the flight of birds, the drawing of marked arrows, and other tricks of pagan augury.[32]

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[28] *Koran*, Chap. V, pp. 92, 93.
[29] Powers, S.J., *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[30] *Koran*, Chap. VIII, p. 142.

Further details on the religion of the Arabs will be more conveniently treated in connection with the establishment of Islam. It is time to essay an interpretation of Arabia's prophet and an appraisement of his claim to divine illumination.

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[31] *Ibid.,* Chap. XXII, p. 277.

[32] Cf. "Preliminary Discourse" to Sale's work, Sect. V. Also Hastings, *Encycl.,* Vol. I, art. "Arabs."

36. The Confidant of Allah

THE Mohammedan era commences with the date of July 16, A.D. 622, on which day Mohammed is said to have migrated from Mecca to Medina. He was at the time in his early forties according to one tradition, in his early fifties according to yet another. He died in 632. He was thus a contemporary of St. Gregory the Great, Gregory of Tours, Isidore of Seville, the emperor Heraclius, and St. Augustine of Canterbury, while his life span coincided with several significant events in world history. The Lombards established their power in Italy. France and England were approaching unification under respective Frankish and Saxon dynasties. Augustine converted Ethelbert and together they began to win England to the unity of Christendom, at the same time that Recared, renouncing Arius' heresy, was bringing his Spanish Visigoths back to the Roman communion. Heraclius restored Christian power in the east by driving the last surge of Sassanid might back from the walls of Constantinople to Nineveh. In the far east China's Golden Age was dawning with the rise of the Tang Dynasty.

In Chapter XCIII of the Koran Allah is represented as saying to Mohammed: "Did thy Lord not find thee an orphan, and hath he not taken care of thee? And did he not find thee needy, and hath he not enriched thee?" Again in Chapter XLIII the fellow townsmen of the prophet are made to say: "Had this Koran been sent down to some great man of either of the two cities, we would have received it." Tradition confirms and amplifies the biographical data here given. His father Abdallah and his mother Amina died when he was an infant and he passed under the care of the patriarch of the (Hashimite) family, his grandfather Abdalmuttalib. The Hashimites were a respected family in the Koreish tribe, but were neither wealthy nor socially prominent. On the grandfather's death, an uncle, Abu Talib, took the boy into his household. What formal education Mohammed received is not known, but the Koran is sufficient evidence that he was not illiterate. The Arabic original shows him acquainted with versification and able to compose in verse, while it is hard to attribute his knowledge of history (and pseudohistory) to information picked up in random conversation. Further, unless one be a good Moslem and hold that the theology of the Koran came to Mohammed through strictest revelation, one must see in it a degree of study, comparison, and synthesis which evidences a fairly trained mind. Mohammed, being obliged to earn his living, took service in some minor capacity with the caravans plying along the western coast. Hence the reproach that he was a camel driver, and hence more importantly an opportunity for him to broaden his culture by travel and contact with other peoples than his own Meccans. Faring southward on the caravan route, he would have met the Sabeans of the region of Yemen as well as the Jews and Christians who were numerous there. Southern Palestine, where the caravan route terminated on the shores of the Mediterranean, was a fringe of the Byzantine empire, a center of Jewry, and a minor Thebaid of Christian monasticism.

A turn of fortune now contributed to put Mohammed on the path of his great adventure. He entered upon the first of his marital unions, the lady of his choice being the rich widow Khadijah. With her he lived in contented monogamy until she died, having borne him several children. Her wealth secured him that position in Meccan society which gave weight to what he might have to say. Now likewise he enjoyed leisure to reflect and to co-ordinate thoughts long stirring in his active mind, leisure to orientate projects already alluring his ambitious soul. Tradition affirms that he gave himself to meditation, especially during the month of Ramadan each year when he retired to the uninhabited region of Hara. His thoughts ran on the unity of God and the future state of man. Mecca, on the contrary, stood committed to "the companions of God" and to a multitude of fetishes, while Meccans along with most Arabs had only rudimentary notions of survival beyond the grave.

For about five years his monotheistic and eschatological convictions deepened under the influence on the one hand of brooding meditation, on the other of the acute allergy he felt for the complacent polytheism of his Meccan associates. His was an active, self-confident spirit. With such the apprehension of the premise: "The world is out of joint" urgently demands the conclusion: "I was born to set it right." Mohammed could not merely go the way of his own convictions and allow others to go the way of theirs. He heard "the call," and so at the end of the five year period we find him propagandizing for Allah and eternal life, first in the circle of his own relations, then in the whole little world of Mecca.

The problem of Mohammed's biography is vexing, and for no period more so than for this Meccan period of his first preaching.[33] Yet one point is gratifyingly clear. He claimed from the start of the Meccan preaching that Allah had confided a revelation to him. The point is of such importance that we must quote a few of the "prophet's" more striking declarations.

> By the perspicuous book of the Koran; verily we (i.e., Allah) have sent down the same on a blessed night, on the night wherein is distinctly sent down the decree of every determined thing as a command from us. Verily we have ever used to send apostles with revelations at proper intervals, as a mercy from thy Lord.[34]

The "blessed night" is specified as *Al Kadr* or the night of power and of the divine decrees: it is commonly understood by Mohammedan theologians to have been the night of 23–24 Ramadan.

> Verily, we sent down the Koran in the night of Al Kadr. And what shall make thee understand how excellent the night of Al Kadr

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[33] Probably there was a sketch of the prophet's life written in early days to serve as a kind of explanatory gloss to the Koran. About A.D. 780 Ibn Ishaq wrote a life of Mohammed. In the ninth century appeared two more biographies and a voluminous corpus of the traditional sayings of Mohammed and his first companions. There are besides countless anecdotes about the prophet in Muslim literature. The composite picture which emerges from all these materials is highly confusing, for the prophet is credited with the exercise of every virtue and with all the wisdom of Solomon and with thaumaturgic power, while on the other hand he is depicted as a man untrammeled by any moral inhibitions, an astute schemer, a robber baron. Generally speaking, we may say that the orthodox dogma that the prophet was impeccable in all he did quite satisfied Muslims in the face of these contradictions, up until the past century, when a need was felt to make the founder of Islam a reputable and consistent figure according to western standards. Hence such biographies as that composed by Ameer Ali Syed.

[34] *Koran,* Chap. XLIV, p. 402.

> is? The night of Al Kadr is better than a thousand months. Therein do the angels descend, and the spirit of Gabriel also, by the permission of their Lord, with His decrees concerning every matter. It is peace until the rising of the morn.[35]

Near Allah's throne, it must be understood, lies the great book, the archetype of the Koran, in which are written all the future fates of the world as well as all revelations of Himself that Allah will make. The Koran, a portion of this archetype, containing the revelation which was to close all revelations was brought down by Gabriel on the night of 23–24 Ramadan to the lowest heaven and thence communicated piecemeal by word of mouth to Mohammed. The latter is tireless in asserting that he has direct heavenly enlightenment. To quote:

> By the star when it setteth; your companion Mohammed erreth not, nor is he led astray: neither does he speak of his own will. It is no other than a revelation, which hath been revealed unto him. One mighty in power, endued with understanding, taught it him: and he appeared in the highest part of the horizon. Afterwards he approached the prophet, and near unto him; until he was at the distance of two bows' length from him, or yet nearer; and he revealed unto his servant that which he revealed. The heart of Mohammed did not falsely represent that which he saw. Will ye therefore dispute with him concerning that which he saw? He also saw him another time, by the lote-tree beyond which there is no passing: near it is the garden of eternal abode. When the lote-tree covered that which it covered, his eyesight turned not aside, neither did it wander: and he really beheld some of the greatest signs of his Lord.[36]

Among Koranic texts, the three just quoted are the most explicit as to the manner in which the revelation is claimed to have been communicated. They refer to specific occasions on which certain parts of the Koran were said to be revealed. The rest of it (and far and away the major portion) must have been understood to have come to Mohammed through some sort of internal speech, as we gather partly from Koranic, and partly from traditional evidence. Although the prophet occasionally, especially when under stress of opposition from adversaries, fulminates in his own person, yet ordinarily he maintains the fiction of speaking at Allah's dictation. "Say . . ." and "Read . . ." often introduce the text, as though Allah were dictating to his chosen secretary, while the "We" of the *pluralis majestatis* is constantly met with. In several places Mohammed is addressed by Allah: "Thou who art covered up" (namely, by the prophet's mantle). Tradition supplies a gloss on the sense of this last, for it says that Mohammed, when seized by the spirit, covered himself completely with a thick cloak, from beneath which he uttered the words which came to him and which were dutifully copied down by the amanuensis present. During these seizures Mohammed trembled and sweated profusely.[37]

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[35] *Ibid.,* Chap. XCVII, p. 495.

[36] *Ibid.,* Chap. LIII, p. 427.

The heavy artillery of controversial apologetics has long since pulverized Islamic claim to a genuine revelation. The classic stricture on the pretensions of Mohammed's religion was penned by St. Thomas. After a brilliant summary of the credentials of Christian revelation, he contrasts the case for Islam.

> On the other hand those who introduced the errors of the sects proceeded in contrary fashion, as instanced by Mohammed, who enticed people with the promise of carnal pleasures, to the desire of which the concupiscence of the flesh instigates. He also delivered commandments in keeping with his promise by giving the reins to carnal pleasure, wherein it is easy for carnal men to obey: and the lessons of truth which he inculcated were only such as can be easily known to any man of average wisdom by his natural powers: yea rather the truths which he taught were mingled by him with many fables and most false doctrines. Nor did he add any signs of supernatural agency, which alone are a fitting witness to divine inspiration, since a visible work that can be from God alone proves the teacher of truth to be invisibly inspired. But he asserted that he was sent in the power of arms, a sign that is not lacking even to robbers and tyrants. Again those who believed in him from the outset were not wise men practiced in things divine and human, but beastlike men who dwelt in the wilds, utterly ignorant of all divine teaching. And it was by a multitude of such men and the force of arms that he compelled others to submit to his law. Lastly, no divine oracles of prophets in a previous age bore witness to him; rather did he corrupt almost all the teaching of the Old and New Testaments by a narrative replete with fables, as one may see by a

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[37] Cf. *Koran, passim;* also *The Religion of Islam,* by M. Mohammed Ali (Lahore: Ripton Press, 1936), Chap. II.

> perusal of his law. Hence by a cunning device he did not commit the reading of the Old and New Testament Books to his followers, lest he should thereby be convinced of falsehood. Thus it is evident that those who believe his words believe lightly.[38]

The Koranic claim to direct divine origin can be explained, then, either by supposing that Mohammed imagined that Allah spoke to him or by charging him with conscious imposture. Both these portraits of him have been often enough painted. Perhaps the truth about him lies midway between the theory of hallucination and that of imposture. That he was a man of intense and violent feeling, intransigent, and impatient of contradiction is sufficiently evidenced in the habitual vehemence of his style and the intemperate maledictions he hurls. We submit that such a character is a fit subject for the abnormal psychological phenomenon known as automatism.[39] In Mohammed's mind the two convictions of Allah's unity and man's eternal survival in joy or pain had become master ideas. Having neither guide nor counselor nor confidant, not being skilled to discern the spirits which were moving him, he could readily have thought that these master ideas were "voices" from a supramundane Speaker. Their unusualness — monotheism and eternal life were not beliefs current among his Meccan associates — and their intensity would encourage the notion that they came from the other world, while his own energetic nature would contribute to the delusion that he was Allah's chosen apostle. Moreover, he was familiar with exemplars of prophetism in numerous figures of Arab legend, in the poets and soothsayers who were supposedly "seized" by the divine spirit, in the Old Testament prophets, and in Christ. Altogether, there appears no great difficulty in the theory that Mohammed thought himself a vehicle of revelation when he began his Meccan preaching.

How long this conviction remained serene and unclouded by doubt is another question. Still another question is it, how much time-serving deception and chicanery he interpolated into his

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[38] The *Summa contra Gentiles,* transl. by the English Dominican Fathers (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1924), Bk. I, Chap. 6, p. 13.

[39] The subject of automatism is treated in W. James's *Variety of Religious Experiences* (London: Longmans, 1935), pp. 234, 250, 478–483. The author, of course, denies all supernatural intervention and hence distorts facts in the case of genuine prophetism. For the rest, he is reliable.

"revelation" under the stress of opposition and of the exigencies of the politico-military community of which he made himself the head. Were any chronology possible in dating the succession of the "revelations," the evolution of Mohammed's mind might be studied.[40] Tradition testifies that he underwent periods of diffidence in the genuinity of his supernatural election, that more than once he was tempted to compromise, even to the extent of admitting the three Meccan goddesses into his theology. Still, if we may safely judge from the prevailing tone of the whole Koran, he seems to have been able to work himself up at will into a state of subjective conviction of the reality of his prophetic powers. Such ability we may plausibly attribute to the same traits of violence and self-confidence which have been already noticed. What is much more to his discredit is his willingness to forge revelations for personal or political advantage. It is not necessary to draw up an exhaustive catalogue of all instances of his chicanery, for enough examples immediately occur to indict him. There are the "harem revelations," conveniently proclaimed to save his face after he had violated not only his word, but his own (revealed) law. There are the instructions which he happily "received" to settle the squabbles of his henchmen anent the distribution of the loot of their first successful raids. There are the rules of conduct toward enemies, which change (with the growing strength of Mohammed's party) from the Meccan precepts of meekness to the Medinan command of the Holy War of extermination.

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[40] The leaves on which Mohammed's secretaries copied his utterances were not kept in their time-order and, further, contained no dating, apart from a few occasional references to current events. The Koran in its present form was edited probably at the instance of the caliph Othman several decades after Mohammed's death. The editors adopted a naïve scheme of arrangement: namely, the longer utterances were placed as the early chapters, and so on, until at the end the chapters consist of only a few sentences.

37. A Prophet's Progress

KHADIJAH, whom Mohammedan commentators reckon as one of the four women who attained perfection; Ali, son of Abu Talib and Mohammed's cousin; a devoted slave named Zeid; these made up the first group of converts to Islam. Abu Talib never abandoned paganism, but through his affection for his nephew he used his influence as head of the Hashimite family to protect him in the storm of opposition which soon arose. As for Mohammed himself in this early period, he showed that he was far from being a distracted visionary by sheltering gratefully beneath the wing of his pagan uncle. Other patrons he deliberately courted among the principal men of Mecca, and was so far successful with six of them as not merely to win their favor, but to win them to his religious views. These were the Six Companions, who loom large in Islamic history and from whom much of the traditional lore about the prophet professedly stems. Three of them — Abu Bekr, Omar, and Othman — were to be caliphs who within a quarter century would crush the Persian empire and snatch Egypt and Syria from the Byzantine empire.

It was not until he felt sure that at least a small group of the "higher ups" of his city were behind him, that Mohammed sought to gain a general following. And with reason, for the preaching of the very first article of Islam's faith would bring collision with strong vested interests in the civic polity. To a considerable degree Mecca's prosperity depended upon the pan-Arabic character of the Kaaba shrine, which attracted great crowds of pilgrims. Naturally, a prophet of monotheism would be inveighing against the polytheistic cult of the Kaaba shrine and thereby thrusting at the merchants and aristocrats of Mecca in the sensitive area of their well-lined money belts.

Chapters VI and VII of the Koran seem to reflect the spirit of the first public preaching, since their doctrinal and moral content is quite rudimentary, since purely Meccan errors are attacked, and since here the prophet shepherds only a *pusillus grex* which he guides cautiously and tentatively in an atmosphere obviously unfriendly. Of himself at this period he declares: "Verily I am commanded to be the first who professeth Islam. And it was said unto me: Thou shalt by no means be one of the idolaters. . . . Verily my Lord hath directed me into a right way, a true religion, the sect of Abraham the orthodox; and he was no idolater. Verily my prayers, and my worship, and my life, and my death are dedicated unto God the Lord of all creatures: He hath no companions. This I have been commanded. I am the first Moslem."[41] Of his commission to preach he is equally assured. "I say not unto you, The treasures of God are in my power: neither do I say, I know the secrets of God: neither do I say unto you, Verily I am an angel: I follow only that which is revealed unto me."[42] He is instructed to abstain from angry disputes about the genuineness of his mission. "Say, God sent it down: then leave them to amuse themselves with their vain discourse. This book which we have sent down is blessed; confirming that which was revealed before it; and is delivered unto thee that thou mayest preach it unto the metropolis of Mecca and to those who are round about it."[43] This theory that he is one (the last and greatest, be it noted) in the long series of God's prophets is a position from which Mohammed never receded. At this early stage he seems to have imagined that the Jews and Christians would receive him and his "revelation" eagerly. When later experience disillusioned him, he charged both Jews and Christians with mutilating their Scriptures in order to conceal the predictions they contained concerning him. He professes to see in the opposition and mockery with which the Meccans greeted his claims the same treatment which was accorded to Noah and Moses, to Shoaib and Sale (apocryphal Arabian prophets), to Christ and the Apostles.

Later on an attempt will be made in the light of all the Koranic texts to appraise the attributes of Mohammed's Allah, where it will appear that his concept of the divinity evolved appreciably. What the Meccans were first called on to accept was a God without compeers, provident over all that he had created, able to read the sincerity or hypocrisy in human hearts, and apportioning man's lot at last in heaven or hell. "God causeth the grain and the date-stone to put forth: he bringeth forth the living from the dead, and he bringeth forth the dead from the living. This is God. It is he who hath ordained the stars for you . . . it is he who hath produced you from one soul. . . . It is he who sendeth down water from heaven, and has hereby produced the springing buds of all things. . . . He is the maker of heaven and earth; he created all things and is omniscient."[44] "He is the gracious, the wise," yet: "Whomsoever God shall direct, he will be rightly directed; and whomsoever he shall lead astray, they shall perish. Moreover he has created for hell many of the genii and of men; they have hearts by which they understand not, and they have ears by which they hear not, and they have eyes by which they see not."[45]

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[41] *Koran,* Chap. VI, p. 99; pp. 115, 116.

[42] *Ibid.,* Chap. VI, p. 103.

[43] *Ibid.,* Chap. VI, p. 107.

On a day which is Allah's secret, Mohammed told them, the trumpet will sound and all the dead will rise from the grave. (Later on the question of the state of the dead while waiting for the resurrection perplexed him, but in early days he did not advert to it.) Then "They who believe and do that which is right, shall be the companions of paradise; they shall remain therein forever. And we will remove all grudges from their minds; rivers shall run at their feet. And they shall say: Praised be God who has directed us unto this felicity." A wall or partition separates paradise from hell and through this the blessed and the damned address one another. The former will upbraid the latter for not heeding Mohammed's revelation. "And the inhabitants of hell fire shall call unto the inhabitants of paradise, saying: Pour unto us some water, or of those refreshments which God has bestowed on you. They shall answer: Verily God hath forbidden them to the unbelievers, who made a laughing-stock of their religion."[46] Imaginative details later filled in this simple eschatological sketch.

At Mecca the legalism of Islam was in an inchoative state. Mohammed was feeling his way, and at any rate probably did not care to intensify opposition by making believers a race apart through multiple sectarian observances. He in fact enjoined that they should turn aside from detractors of his teaching, returning to them unruffled when their mood had changed. Prayer and almsgiving he recommended, but did not as yet lay down precise canons. His followers might eat any food "except it be that which dieth of itself, or blood poured forth, or swine's flesh, or that which is profane, having been slain in the name of some other than of God. But whoso shall be compelled by necessity to eat of these things, not lusting nor wilfully transgressing, verily thy Lord will be gracious unto him and merciful."[47]

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[44] *Ibid.*, Chap. VI, pp. 108, 109.
[45] *Ibid.*, Chap. VII, p. 136.
[46] *Ibid.*, Chap. VII, pp. 119, 120.

Opposition from chiefs of the Meccan community was, for all his caution, his habitual portion, and Allah has to reassure him: "And thus have we placed in every city chief leaders of the wicked men thereof, that they may act deceitfully therein; but they shall act deceitfully against their own souls only; and they know it not."[48] Mohammed had insinuated that the Meccans practiced infanticide in the case of unwanted daughters, and had ridiculed their fantastic food taboos. But what really made the citizens thirst for his blood was his tireless and savage satire leveled against their cherished idols. "Verily the false deities whom ye invoke besides God are servants like unto you (i.e., the sun and the planets). Call therefore upon them, and let them give you an answer, if ye speak truth. Have they feet to walk with? Or have they hands to lay hold with? Or have they eyes to see with? Or have they ears to hear with? Call upon your companions (i.e., your idols whom you make companions of God), and then lay a snare for me, and defer it not; for God is my protector, who sent down the book of the Koran; and he protecteth the righteous. But they whom ye invoke besides him cannot assist you, neither do they help themselves. And if ye call on them to direct you, they will not hear. Thou seest them look toward thee, but they see not."[49]

Neither Mohammed nor the little group of influential men whom he had won over were finally able to protect the humbler Moslem converts. Ostracized, imprisoned, and tortured, some of them gave up Islam, while others sought safety in flight. Of these refugees the two most important groups are those who settled in Medina to form a nucleus for the later triumphant Moslem community, and those who fled to Christian Abyssinia. The last named were hospitably maintained by King Armah, who listened interestedly to their exposition of Islam and chivalrously refused to deliver them up to the Meccan deputies who were sent to arrest them. With King Armah the prophet later on corresponded, requesting the repatriation of the refugees and inviting him to become a "true believer." By the time of the correspondence Islam had shown its fanatical military might by the conquest of all Arabia, so that the "invitation" to conversion was equivalent to the "invitations" issued by modern dictators to little peoples to join up and share in the millennial blessings of the new order. Armah understood it for such and, finding his kingdom in no condition to resist an invasion, professed Islam externally in the presence of Mohammed's cousin Jafar. The prophet died shortly afterward; no steps were taken to Koranize Abyssinia; the little country, being off the route of subsequent Moslem conquests, was left unharassed and retained its Christian heritage.[50]

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[47] *Ibid.*, Chap. VI, p. 114.
[48] *Ibid.*, Chap. VI, pp. 110, 111.
[49] *Ibid.*, Chap. VII, p. 137.

Pressure was constantly exerted on Abu Talif to silence or else cast forth his troublesome nephew, who was traduced as "sorcerer, liar, forger, distracted poet." Mecca, they argued with the aging patriarch of the Hashimites, under its old gods had done well by itself. "We have lived in affluence. We found our fathers practicing a religion, and we tread in their footsteps."[51] For Abu Talif, too, as a matter of fact "the old-time religion" was quite good enough, and anyway he found the peace of his old age destroyed by the odium brought upon his clan by Mohammed's propaganda. He remonstrated, with what senile querulousness we may imagine, but Mohammed respectfully urged the duty of following his higher "call" and succeeded in maintaining himself in the good graces of his uncle. A league of the other families of the Koreish tribe was then formed, to ostracize the Hashimite family, which caused further anguish to the old patriarch, but did not prevent the steady increase of Islam's proselytes. Finally a crisis developed with the death in the same year (probably 619) of Abu Talib and Khadijah. With the ties of affection which bound him to Mecca severed and with his enemies at last free to plot his undoing, Mohammed seems to have planned to organize his followers for active resistance against their oppressors. He removed to Taif, a town about sixty miles east of Mecca, hoping to centralize his power there for action against the Koreish. But he found the time not yet ripe. The Taifian Jews, whom he had hoped to win over, proved cold to his advances, while the common people rose up and escorted him purposefully to the city limits.

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[50] Cf. Sir Wallis Budge's *History of Ethiopia, Nubia and Abyssinia* (London: Methuen, 1928). As the writer explains, however, Abyssinian Christianity suffered much because the Moslem conquest of North Africa cut it off from communication with Christian countries. For the facts in the above paragraph, cf. Vol. I, p. 270 sqq.

[51] *Koran,* Chap. XLIII, p. 398.

He returned perforce to Mecca and shortly, to compensate for the Taifian repulse, promulgated the story that Allah had transported him by night to Jerusalem and there manifested wonderful secrets. "Praise be unto him who transported his servant by night from the sacred temple of Mecca to the farther temple of Jerusalem, the circuit of which we have blessed, that we might show some of our signs."[52] His plans were now directed toward Medina, whither he dispatched still more of his harried flock together with six Medinese Jews whom he had converted. The six served him well, so that a year or two later a delegation from their tribe came to Al Akaba, north of Mecca, and swore an oath of fealty to him. In 622 a still larger delegation of Medinese arrived to offer him the protection, armed if necessary, of their own city, where by this time there was scarcely a house which did not count at least one Moslem. The covenant was the last straw for the Koreish, who rightly read into it a declaration of war and who at once decreed the prophet's assassination. Aware of the plan (through the angel Gabriel, say the orthodox), he fled by night to Mount Thur southeast of the city, where with two companions he lay hidden in a cave. The legendary spider arrived on time to spin its web over the cavedoor and turn away the murder gang that was searching for the fugitive. Thence by a circuitous route he fared to Medina, where to the delight of the "true believers" he established himself, building a house for himself and Islam's first mosque for Allah.

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[52] *Ibid.*, Chap. XVII, pp. 226, 227.

Though now head of a tolerated religious sect, he soon evidenced his intention to use his improved fortunes for other ends than the mere preaching of his doctrine. He meant first to play his political cards so well in Medina that he would be recognized as the city's ruler, and then through force or intrigue to extend his control over reluctant Mecca. Jews and Arabs in Medina had never combined into a stable political compound, so Mohammed's early effort was directed toward having himself chosen as an impartial arbiter in their endless bickerings. He next made individual approaches to the two groups — to the Arabs to unite with him on nationalistic grounds, to the Jews to accept him as a monotheistic prophet like their own Moses. The response in each case was disappointing, for just as the Medinese Arabs could not expand their nationalism to submit to the rule of a Meccan, so the Jews found it highly amusing when an *ommi* (gentile) offered himself as a sharer in Israel's perquisite of prophetism. He was forced to bide his time until he was in a position to use his really apodictic argument of the scimitar to persuade the Medinese to choose him to rule over them.

There was no waiting in the prosecution of his designs against Mecca. Holy war became a tenet of Islam, as Allah spoke: "Will ye not fight against people who have violated their oaths, and conspired to expel the apostle of God; and who of their own accord assaulted you the first time? Will ye fear them? But it is more just that ye should fear God, if ye are true believers. Attack them therefore; God shall punish them by your hands, and will cover them with shame, and will give you the victory over them; and he will heal the breasts of the people who believe, and will take away the indignation of their hearts. For God will be turned unto whom he pleaseth; and God is knowing and wise."[53] Armed bands were accordingly dispatched from Medina, to prey upon the caravans which constituted Mecca's life line. T. E. Lawrence in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* paints Homeric descriptions of desert raids, for which he asserts that the nomad Arabs have a true genius. The Arab fighting man has no stomach for the monotony of defensive war, nor is he at his best as a cog in large scale offensive operations; but, astride a racing camel and swooping down on an immediate objective, he is a fearless and terrible foe. A twofold success attended the efforts of the early Moslem guerrillas, for they provisioned their own impecunious coreligionists and cast panic into Mecca. A climax was reached in 624 with "the miracle of Badr." In that year Mohammed dispatched a raiding party to intercept an unusually rich caravan returning from Syria to Mecca. By some means Abu Sofian, leader of the caravan, learned of the impending ambush and sent couriers to demand a rescue party. However, by clever maneuvers he succeeded in evading Mohammed's men. The relief column also missed their rendezvous with the caravan, but blundered into a collision with the better armed, if somewhat smaller, Moslem force at Badr about one hundred and fifty miles north of Mecca. The "true believers" did manfully in this prelude of Islam's long battle history, slaying several dozens of infidels and taking as many prisoners. The prophet, in his elation over the victory, attributed it to two miracles which Allah worked when he first hurled dust into the eyes of the Meccans and then sent Gabriel with a corps of mounted angels to rout them.[54]

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[53] *Ibid.*, Chap. IX, p. 150.

It is not certain that Mohammed was in the melee at Badr, but he was in command at the disastrous field of Ohod in the following year. Abu Sofian had roused Mecca to action after Badr, and the city fathers recruited a genuinely efficient army of some three thousand warriors. At its head Abu Sofian moved on Medina, encamping finally to prepare for the assault at a point six miles north of the latter city. Mohammed hesitated, but seems to have doubted the loyalty of the Medinese, so went to meet Abu Sofian's army in the field. The ensuing battle takes its name from Mount Ohod at whose foot the Moslem lines were drawn up. Strategic disposition of his archers on heights from which they showered the Meccans gave Mohammed an initial advantage, until a fatal trait of Arab character cropped out to turn the tables. The archers left their position to seize loot from the fallen enemy; Abu Sofian rallied his men who, with their superiority in cavalry and armor, speedily chased the "true believers" from the field. The prophet himself was severely wounded.

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[54] *Ibid.*, Chap. III, pp. 36, 50.

Had Abu Sofian pushed his advantage by entering Medina, the course of world history might have been altered. His return to Mecca, however, left Islam's stronghold intact, nor was Mohammed the man to let a military reverse which had cost him no more than a hundred soldiers discourage him. While convalescing from his wounds, he received the illumination necessary to explain Allah's refusal to confound the infidels at Ohod as he had done at Badr. All the shrewdness and resourcefulness of Mohammed's mind is shown in the apologia developed in Chapter III of the Koran. Never once does he use the facile argument: "Well, we suffered a setback, but what of it?" for that would have been to traduce the invincibility of Allah and his cause, to shrink the stature of his prophet to the proportions of a robber-baron dependent for success on human means. Instead, the adverse outcome was part of Allah's predestined plan.

> To God belongeth whatsoever is in heaven and on earth; he spareth whom he pleaseth and he punisheth whom he pleaseth; for God is merciful.[55]

Ohod was a trial of their faith.

> Be not dismayed, neither be ye grieved; for ye shall be superior to the unbelievers if ye believe. If a wound hath happened to you in war, a like wound hath already happened to the unbelieving people (at Badr); and we cause these days of different success interchangeably to succeed each other among men, that God may know those who believe and may have martyrs from among you, and that God may prove those who believe and destroy the infidels. Did ye imagine that ye should enter paradise, when as yet God knew not those among you who fought strenuously in his cause, nor knew those who persevered with patience?[56]

The doctrine here insinuated that those slain in battle for Islam die as martyrs is still further specified.

> Thou shalt in no wise reckon those who have been slain at Ohod in the cause of God dead; nay, they are sustained alive with their Lord, rejoicing for what God of his favor hath granted them and being glad for those who, coming after them, have not as yet overtaken them; because there shall be no fear come on them, neither shall they be grieved.[57]

[55] *Ibid.*, Chap. III, pp. 50, 51.
[56] *Ibid.*, Chap. III, p. 51.
[57] *Ibid.*, Chap. III, p. 55.

Mohammed upbraids the "second guessers" who accused him of imprudence in not staying on the defensive in Medina, censures the "slackers" who had refused to follow him out to Ohod, attributes his defeat to the covetousness of the corps of archers, as well as to the failure of the fainthearted to reform their broken ranks when he had shouted to them in the name of Allah. His great problem now (safely back in Mecca) is naturally one of morale. Hence he assures the faithful that Allah's miraculous intervention was not wanting even in the hour of their reverses, for it was Allah who cast a spell on the mind of Abu Sofian and caused him to withdraw. He fulminates the usual threat of hell-fire against those who are leaving him to return to Mecca and their idols. He addresses the fainthearted.

> Verily they among you who turned their backs on the day whereon the two armies met each other at Ohod, Satan caused them to slip for some crime which they had committed; but now God has forgiven them, for God is gracious and merciful.[58]

What threatened to grow into a schism among his followers he adroitly heals. Those who had counseled against giving battle at Ohod and who had remained in Medina now were bitter in their complaints over relatives who had been slain. Still maintaining that they had been recusant to a divine command, he takes no measures against them, but instead pretends to a special revelation of Allah's forgiveness and promise of future victories.

> And as to the mercy granted unto the disobedient from God thou, O Mohammed, hast been mild towards them; but if thou hadst been severe and hard-hearted, they had surely separated themselves from about thee. Therefore forgive them and ask pardon for them: and consult them in the affair of war; and after thou hast deliberated, trust in God; for God loveth those who trust in him. If God help you, none shall conquer you; but if he desert you, who is it that will help you after him? Therefore in God let the faithful trust.[59]

The resumption of Moslem raids on their caravans soon brought home to the Meccans how grave an error Abu Sofian had committed in allowing Mohammed to hold Medina. In 627 they

[58] *Ibid.*, Chap. III, p. 53.
[59] *Ibid.*, Chap. III, p. 54.

accordingly besieged the city, which by this time had been protected by light breastworks thrown up at vulnerable points. True to Lawrence's analysis of Arab war-making, they had no resource against an entrenched enemy and for a whole month sat down before Medina, confining their operations to picking off a few of the defenders with arrows. When provisions ran low and when Mohammed's agents stirred up dissension among them, they raised the siege. A revelation anent this delivery of the faithful runs as follows:

> O true believers, remember the favor of God towards you, when armies of infidels came against you, and we sent against them a wind and hosts of angels which ye saw not: and God beheld that which ye did.[60]

The prestige acquired by this successful defense made Mohammed master of Medina. While allowing his former pagan adversaries to remain in the city on their good behavior, he expelled the Jews and handed over their holdings to deserving faithful. Against the other Jewish settlements in east-central Arabia he warred ruthlessly, slaying, enslaving, or making tributaries of the people on whom he had once counted as his chief prospective allies.

Medina, however, had never been regarded by Mohammed as other than a rung in a ladder to higher things. Control of Mecca, the hub of the caravan routes of western Arabia and site of the pan-Arabic Caaba shrine, must be won. Now six years after he had barely escaped with a whole skin from his native city, the prophet felt himself ready to make his play for the rich stakes. He had espoused Abu Sofian's daughter and his old opponent was acting as his agent to bring the rest of the influential Meccans around to the view that peace ought to be concluded with the Moslems. In 628 Mohammed led 14,000 faithful on what was ostensibly a pilgrimage to Mecca. The home guard turned out and challenged them at the outskirts of the city. Demanding negotiations, Mohammed secured from the city fathers a pact formally recognizing him as lord of Medina and concluding peace between his followers and the Meccans. This was enough for the moment, and he withdrew without insisting on entering the city. A few months later, counting on the trustful disarmament of Mecca, he moved swiftly with a war party into the city and, without striking a blow, forced a capitulation on his own terms. These were: abolition of public idolatrous worship; amnesty for his enemies (an article later violated by six executions); waiving of all claims that the faithful might have to their confiscated property; preservation of the old civic government, but under Mohammed's control.

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[60] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXXIII, pp. 342, 343.

During the four years of life which remained to him, he used the great prestige he now enjoyed as lord of Mecca to advance Islam's religious and political interests. His military expeditions were uniformly successful due to the reckless courage of the religiously inspired faithful, due perhaps still more to his really excellent generals — Omar, Khaled, and Amru. It was, however, chiefly through diplomacy that he won the alliance of numerous tribes and their acceptance, at least externally, of Islam. Directing his ambitions beyond the confines of Arabia, he sent two moderately successful expeditions into southern Syria and dispatched letters, besides the one already mentioned to the king of Abyssinia, to the Byzantine emperor, the king of Persia, and the governor of Egypt, inviting them to embrace Islam. The efforts he was making to strengthen his religious institution internally are attested by the body of detailed legislation "revealed" during this period. Though he still resided at Medina, he steadily pushed forward the reformation of Mecca into the holy city of Islam. Its idols and sacred stones were cast down and indecent practices prohibited; through "revelation" a new interpretation was given to the holiness of the Caaba shrine; regulations were promulgated for the conduct of the pilgrimage, and infidels were forbidden to make it.

Mohammed's personal character seems to have deteriorated steadily during these years of his triumph. The six personal enemies slain in violation of the terms of Mecca's capitulation are examples of the policy of ruthlessness he adopted toward his now vanquished opponents. His denunciations and actions against Jews and Christians grew progressively more intolerant, setting the standard for the persecuting zeal of the future caliphs. He egregiously abused the people's belief in his prophetic powers. Those among the Moslems who opposed his policies had their right of free speech hobbled not by any assertion of his authority as their temporal prince, but by being threatened *nominatim* by Allah in special "revelations." The record of his incontinence is rendered only more lurid by pretended divine permission to act as he did. Within three months of Khadijah's death he married another widow, the relict of one of the Abyssinian exiles. Three years later he added the child-wife Ayesha, daughter of Abu Bekr and but ten years old. After still another three years he is found with seven wives. At the time of his death, he had, besides concubines, twelve wives, with their individual apartments opening directly into Islam's first mosque at Medina. By explicit Koranic law polygamy is allowed up to the number of four. Allah, however, gave the prophet carte blanche in the matter.

> O prophet, we have allowed thee thy wives unto whom thou hast given their dower and also the slaves which thy right hand possesseth of the booty which God hath granted thee; and the daughters of thy uncle and the daughters of thy aunt, both on thy father's side and on thy mother's side, who have fled with thee from Mecca, and any other believing woman, if she give herself unto the prophet; in case the prophet desire to take her to wife. This is a peculiar privilege granted unto thee above the rest of the true believers. We know what we have ordained them concerning their wives and the slaves which their right hands possess; lest it should be deemed a crime in thee to make use of the privilege granted to thee; for God is gracious and merciful.[61]

Following verses expand this remarkable privilege yet more, so as to sanction Mohammed's taking back at pleasure any wives whom he had divorced. The privilege would thus seem broad enough to satisfy even his singular desires, but the event proved otherwise. For his eye fell upon the wife of Zeid, his adopted son. Zeid accordingly divorced her, while the prophet prepared a revelation abolishing the impediment which forbade him to marry an adopted son's former wife. In another case (*post factum*) a revelation was forthcoming to justify his affair with Mary the Coptic slave, wherein he violated both marriage laws and his solemn oath. The harem hubbub on this occasion was so shrill that he found it necessary to threaten all his wives with divorce and with divine vengeance if they did not hold their tongues.

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[61] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXXIII, p. 348.

Finally, when suspicious circumstances led to whisperings against Ayesha's fidelity, her innocence was "revealed" to Mohammed and he was ordered to inflict four score stripes on each of her accusers.

In March of 632 he chose to signalize in a highly dramatic manner the election of Mecca as the holy city of Islam. By this time his agents there had repaired the sacred precinct, destroyed all idols and *baetyli,* and made effective the exclusion of infidels from the Caaba ceremonies. Accompanied by his twelve wives and a great host of Moslems, with a hundred camels destined for sacrifice, he proceeded by slow stages to Mecca. At each of the ten camps temporary mosques had been set up, in which the pilgrims worshiped according to the now fairly developed ritual and had their religious emotions stirred up by their leader's homilies. On the tenth day, arriving at Mecca, he proceeded to establish by his actions during the next week the observances which Moslems on pilgrimage were to follow. Some of the old pagan observances he omitted, but most he canonized by his example. For instance, he cut his hair and nails, drank of the Zemzen well, and cast stones at Satan at three traditional spots of ill omen in the hills near Mecca. The hundred camels were sacrificially slain and their flesh furnished the *piece de resistance* in a great feast of his entourage. After which he mounted his riding camel and harangued them, promulgating further legislation, and concluding with the apostrophe: "O Lord! I have delivered my message and discharged my ministry. O Lord, I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness to it."[62]

On his return he issued orders for a large-scale raid into southern Syria, but while busily preparing for it he fell into fatal sickness. From May 27, 632, to June 8, with periods of delirium and periods of amelioration, he was racked by fever, headache, and dorsal pains. In a wild moment he called down terrible vengeance from heaven on Jews and Christians. He was intensely disquieted by the murmurs against his appointment of the inexperienced Osama to the Syrian command, repeatedly urged the dispatch of the troops as he tossed in fever, and actually once brought on a serious relapse by entering the mosque and haranguing the people on the subject. He clung fiercely to the life of action and enjoyment which had been his and which he saw symbolized in the persons of his chief captains and of his wives who thronged him. He sensed, however, the hopelessness of the struggle and felt the need of responding to the unspoken question of his followers by indicating his successor. It was a difficult decision, for it virtually meant a choice between hereditary monarchy for Islam and elective monarchy. If he designated Ali, husband of Fatima, the succession would doubtless be secured for his own blood in the persons of Fatima's sons. If he chose Abu Bekr or Omar, then the principle of free election of the most fit would prevail. In either case, he foresaw the likelihood of schism in the community which he had been at such pains to unite. On one occasion, he called for writing material, "that I may make you a writing which shall hinder you from going astray forever." But by the time it was brought, pain and fever had distracted him, and the writing never was made. There can be little doubt that Mohammed well appreciated Abu Bekr's and Omar's abilities, and on the other hand knew Ali's serious shortcomings. Being unwilling to set aside Ali's claims openly, he pointed out Abu Bekr indirectly and symbolically. For, during the last week of his sickness, he insisted vehemently that Abu Bekr and no other take his place as leader in prayer each day in Islam's first mosque.

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[62] Cf. *Life of Mohammed,* by Sir W. Muir (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1923), Chap. XXXI.

A surprising cessation of fever and pain together with a slight return of strength enabled him to enter the mosque for the midday prayer on June 8. Abu Bekr stepped aside from the leader's position, but the prophet significantly ordered him to conduct the prayers. Afterward, Mohammed conversed familiarly with his followers for a few moments and was assisted back into Ayesha's apartment, where with a few broken ejaculations of Koranic texts he sank into unconsciousness and died.

38. Shadow of the Crescent

ABU BEKR and Omar acted swiftly to avert the perils of an interregnum by securing the election of an able caliph (*Khalifa* means simply "successor"). First, within a few hours of Mohammed's decease, they frustrated a plan of the chief Medinese to set up one of their own as sheik of the city and to let the Moslems choose themselves a religious leader. Abu Bekr urged that such a division of authority would be unacceptable to the many Arab tribes who had sworn allegiance to Mohammed, and offered the name of Omar as Prince of Medina and Caliph. Omar declining on the score that the prophet had designated Abu Bekr, the latter was accepted by the Medinese chiefs. On the following day, amid solemn preparations for Mohammed's burial,[63] Omar demanded of the "true believers" that they pay immediate fealty to him whom their departed leader had made his substitute *Iman* (prayer leader), "the best among us, the companion of Allah's prophet, the sole companion, the second of the two when they were in the cave alone." Most of the people wanted Abu Bekr, while the partisans of Ali were caught unprepared by this quick action, so that there was a quite general response. The Ali claim, set aside for the time being, was later to be reasserted and to become the root of schism and of bloody wars.

Prudence seemed to dictate canceling the marching orders of the Syrian expedition, so that the army might guard Medina until the effect of Mohammed's death on the volatile dispositions of the neighboring tribes might be judged. But the new caliph had pledged himself to obey the deceased prophet's injunctions, of which the Syrian expedition was one. Accordingly, Osama, the untried captain, led the fighting men northward. He avenged his father Zeid, slain in a previous campaign in Syria, and laid waste the borderlands of southern Syria. Within a month he returned completely victorious to Medina, but none too soon. For the news that the strong hand of Mohammed was stilled had already caused widespread defection among the tribes he had subjected. There was talk of revolt even in Mecca. The first year of Abu Bekr's caliphate thus became a year of patching up broken treaties where possible and of swift, adequate chastisement of irreconcilables. He dangled before the imagination of the necessitous Arabs, not only the promise of paradise, but also the vision of the flesh pots and pelf of the unbelieving land which lay to the north. Holy war would win both this world and the next. By the strong hand and through a propaganda tuned to the psychology of his people, the new head of Islam won his point, and within a year a united Arabia, for the first time in history, burst forth from peninsular borders upon a career of conquest.

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[63] There was debate as to whether he should be interred in the Moslem graveyard or in the mosque, until Abu Bekr professed to remember that Mohammed had said that "Where a prophet dieth, there shall he be buried." The grave was then dug in the precise spot where he died. Next to him were later buried the bodies of the first two caliphs.

Emphasis must be placed on the phrase: "a united Arabia." Bands of Arabs had been raiding to the north as far back as historical records go. The Bedwadi were a chronic nuisance to the kings of Egypt, while the lower right bank of the Euphrates was constantly exposed to the depredations of marauders from the south. The Canaanites of biblical history were a blend of indigenous people with bands of marauding Arabs, while several waves of adventurers from the great desert plateau of Arabia formed the nucleus of the Hammurabic empire. Islam supplied to this racial penchant toward freebootery a unity which made of it a devastating world force. The caliph could, in consequence, dispatch fighting men by the thousands under able leaders of his choice, whereas the shiek of an average Bedouin raid was happy to count a few hundred effectives in his band. The Arab, too, was definitely proud of being an Arab — a patriotic sentiment which national unity heightened and urged on to puissant deeds in battle with other peoples. How far the religious motive, namely holy war for the spread of Islam, explains the splendid élan of the Saracen hosts sweeping irresistibly to the Atlantic, the Bosporus, and the Indus, is a question. We see in our own age of militant ideologies how human masses may be driven by a slogan.

It does not appear necessary that the slogan be well understood or even earnestly subscribed to, provided only that it be dinned in through constant repetition. Perhaps, then, the roar of *Allah Akbar!* from the Saracen ranks was not the expression of religious conviction and religious zeal which Islam's apologetes assert. Sincere conversions to Islam in Arabia were not numerous, in proportion to the population, at the time of the conquests of the first three caliphs. There was, of course, in the armies a leaven of "true believers" who viewed with religious enthusiasm the prospect of "martyrdom" in battle for Islam, and whose campaigns were a sincere and literal fulfillment of the prophet's command to wage holy war on infidel lands. Among a number of Koranic texts containing this command, the following is typical:

> When ye encounter the infidels, strike off their heads, until ye have made a great slaughter among them; and bind them in bonds; and either give them a free dismission afterwards or exact a ransom; until the war shall have laid down its arms. This shall ye do. Verily if God pleased, he could take vengeance on them without your assistance; but he commandeth you to fight his battles, that he may prove the one of you by the other. And as to those who fight in defense of God's true religion, God will not suffer their works to perish. He will guide them and will dispose their hearts aright; and he will lead them into paradise of which he hath told them. O true believers, if ye assist God by fighting for his religion, he will assist you against your enemies, and will set your feet fast. But as for the infidels, let them perish.[64]

Early successes aplenty attended Arabia's armies on foreign fields, to convince sincere Moslems that the promised divine help was being given and to stimulate by a foretaste of rich booty the cupidity of the generality of the host. The slogan *Allah Akbar!* whatever its intrinsic worth, had passed the test of a good slogan: it worked. It became the battle cry and fanatical shibboleth of further conquests.

With splendid daring the Arabs launched, not one, but three major offensives. Striking straight northward into the territory of the Eastern Roman Empire, they occupied Jerusalem, Damascus, and the whole of Syria. Strong forts in Asia Minor stopped them, but within a few years they sent an armada through the Helles-

[64] *Koran*, Chap. XLVII, p. 410.

pont and besieged Constantinople. The "Greek fire" frustrated their efforts on this occasion as also at a second siege in the early eighth century: the city of Constantine was not to be theirs until seven centuries later. Asia Minor, however, yielded to further pressure. The term of this northern drive was the Danube and the Adriatic, to be reached when the Seljuk Turks took over Islam's banner from the enfeebled hands of the Arabs.

Arabia's northeast corner was held by the Persian Sassanids. This once great Zoroastrian power was lying prostrate after the stunning debacle of its grand push to the walls of Constantinople and Heraclius' terrific counteroffensive to the walls of Ninive. A border incident brought upon the Persians the Sword of Allah (for so Mohammed had dubbed his general, Khalid). The invading Arabs were met in 636 at Kadessia by a Persian army under Rustam. The latter evidenced none of the qualities of the Iranian hero whose name he bore, being disgracefully defeated and slain. Within three months thereafter the Moslems had swarmed across Euphrates and Tigris to the Sassanid capital, Ctesiphon, which fell before a single assault. The rest of the Zoroastrian empire—the mighty fabric constructed by Darius, the Parthians, and the Sassanids—was blown from history's stage like chaff before a storm. By 651 the last of the Sassanids was a refugee at the Chinese court, while Islam's hosts encamped on the banks of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. Later conquests brought this second of Islam's offensives to its term in Transoxiana and Central India.

Byzantium controlled northern Africa at the death of Mohammed, as well as Egypt as far south as Assum. In 638, while the Moslems were still fully occupied in Syria, the restless Amru importuned Caliph Omar to let him strike a blow to cut off Egypt's riches from the Byzantines. Only a few thousand warriors could be spared, but the Copts were disaffected toward Byzantine rule and could be counted on to be helpful. The mummies of ancient Pharaohs must have stirred unhappily in their pyramids as the Bedwadi once again swarmed over the border. Pelusium fell after a brief siege and the Nile was crossed after stubborn resistance from a Byzantine legion guarding the bridge at Memphis. Alexandria was invested and taken after a year's siege. Only mopping up remained, and in 647 had started the conquest of the North African littoral. This last followed a pattern familiar to us from events during World War II in the same region. The Saracens would sweep with incredible speed over vast spaces of desert and semidesert, hold the strong places briefly, and then as swiftly be driven back to the confines of Egypt by reinforcements ferried over from Byzantium. Then the process would be repeated. It was only in 709, after the establishment of a strong fortress in Tunis and after the Moors on the Atlantic coast accepted Islam, that permanent possession was acquired. The conquest of Gothic Spain again followed a pattern familiar in our own day. A sense of false security, treason of Gothic nobles, a lightning invasion by efficient troops brought Islam triumphant to the southern slopes of the Pyrenees. This was the term of the third Moslem offensive. Charles Martel saw to it that the shadow of the crescent did not cross the Pyrenees.

It will be useful to draw up a tabular outline of the spread of Moslem power, though of course comprehensiveness will not be aimed at.

Outline of Islamic Conquest

Syria, Asia Minor, Balkans

633, Bosra taken by treason
633, Damascus besieged
633, Battle of Aiznadin
634, Omar Caliph
634, Damascus taken; massacre
635, Heliopolis and Emesa fall
636, Defeat of great Byzantine army at Yermuk
637, Jerusalem capitulates
638, Antioch taken; remaining strongholds submit; Byzantium gives up Syria
640, Cilicia raided
640, Building of Saracen naval power
644, Osman Caliph
656, Ali Caliph
661, Hassan Caliph, but he abdicates in fa-

Africa and Spain

639, Amru takes Pelusium and Memphis
641 Alexandria taken
642–646, Amru organizes control of Egypt to first cataract
647–648, Abdallah raids North African coast and takes Tripoli
665–672, Akbah raids farther to the west and founds strong military post of Cairoan, south of Tunis
680, He reaches Atlantic, but is slain
689, Zuheir besieges Carthage, but is slain and Moslems retire to Cairoan
692–693, Hassan takes, loses, retakes Carthage
698–709, The Moors drive Arabs back to Egypt,

The Far East

636, Battle of Cadesia on west bank of Euphrates
637, Sack of the Persian capital of Ctesiphon on east bank of Tigris
642, Battle of Nivahend south of Ecbatana, and capture of the latter fortress
645 c., Fall of Isfahan and Persepolis
651, Arabs reach the Oxus River
710, Conquer Transoxiana and reach the Jaxertes River
711, The delta of the Indus becomes a Moslem province under the name of Sind
Eighth century and onward, these far

vor of Muawiyah of the family of Ommeyah, who transfers the caliphate to Damascus and makes it hereditary

673 and 717, Constantinople unsuccessfully besieged

713–716, Arabs conquer Asia Minor, but later lose it to the Byzantines

750, Abassids supplant Ommeyads as caliphs and transfer the caliphate to Bagdad

1060 c., Seljuk Turks, who are Moslems, take over caliphate from Arab Abassids

1100–1300, Crusades

1171, Saladin rules Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia

1288, Othman founds the dynasty of the Ottomans: he and his successors shatter Byzantine power

1370–1405, Islam is overrun by Timur and his Mongols

1413, Ottoman power restored under Mohammed I; pressure renewed on Byzantines

1453 Constantinople falls

1520–1566, Zenith of Ottoman power; Balkans seized; Vienna besieged

1571, Battle of Lepanto and beginning of decline of Islam in Europe

but are later conquered by Arabs and embrace Islam

710–713, Most of Spain conquered by Tarik and Musa

732, Charles Martel at Poitiers checks Saracen threat to France

756, Abderrhman, of the Ommeyad line, establishes Spain as a caliphate independent of Bagdad

1000 c., Obaidullah, a descendant of Ali and Fatima, establishes independent Fatimite caliphate of North Africa, which subsequently annexed Sicily and Southern Italy. Toward the end of the century the Moslems lose these European bridgeheads to the Normans

1097 and 1190, Moslem lands in Spain pass to new dynasties, the Almoravids and Almohads; meantime, Christian rulers in the tiny kingdoms of Castile, Leon, Navarre keep up opposition to Moslems, gradually pushing them southward

1492, Gonsalvo de Cordova conquers Granada, the last Moslem possession on the peninsula

eastern territories of Islam, to speak in general terms, remained spiritually submissive to the Commander of the Faithful, but their political dependence on Bagdad varied according to the forcefulness of the caliph and the ambition of the governors. A number of the provinces were actually or virtually independent kingdoms. In the latter half of the fourteenth century Timur dealt a blow to the political unity of eastern Islam from which it has never recovered

Eleventh and twelfth centuries, Moslem adventurers, beginning with Mahmud of Ghazni, enter India; from Delhi as a center Moslem expeditions fan out and establish independent principalities throughout the peninsula, the throne of Delhi passes from one Moslem dynasty to another until in the sixteenth century the Great Moguls, lineal descendants of Timur, take over and subject practically all of India to Moslem rule

Abu Bekr, Omar, Osman, and Ali spent their caliphates in great simplicity of life near the tomb of Mohammed at Medina. Theirs was the epic age of Islam, when Allah's troopers conquered the vast areas of Zoroastrian culture and severed rich provinces from Christian Byzantium. There were few problems of administration to trouble the devotions of the first four caliphs. The holy war proving successful on all fronts, the constant order of the day was: "Carry on." Booty was so abundant that all parties were content with the Koranic rules of distribution, which were observed at times with a naïve literalness.[65] The Koran likewise supplied thumb rules for the treatment of conquered peoples, who on conversion to Islam were to enjoy the same rights as the Arabs, but who for rejecting Koranic light were to be penalized by the exaction of tribute.[66] Briefly, these first three decades (632–661) exhibit the anomaly of an Arab empire territorially vast, but controlled by only the most rudimentary governmental mechanism. If the conquests were to be consolidated and if Mohammed's religion were to secure any firm hold, it was necessary that the loose patriarchate of the first four caliphs give way to a strong and well-ordered government.

Muawiyah, son of Abu Sofian and governor of Syria during Ali's caliphate, was the first to see what the time demanded. He organized his own Syrian province efficiently and intrigued to extend his control over some of the provinces of the defunct Persian empire. These activities together with his declaration of virtual independence brought Caliph Ali into the field to chastise him. The action was indecisive, and an assassin's dagger shortly terminated Ali's brave but rather futile life. Ali's son, Hassan, was elected caliph, but was too easygoing to struggle against Muawiyah's pretensions, so abdicated in the latter's favor.[67] Significant of the whole new (Ommeyad) order was the immediate transfer of the caliphate from Medina to Damascus. Arabia was thus relegated to the position of a holy land of religious memories, and with it was relegated to the realm of theory Mohammed's idyllic dream of Islam as a patriarchal religious theocracy. Muawiyah proceeded to organize an empire on the Eastern Roman and Sassanid model. Ready to hand was the machinery—a bit rusty after a quarter century of disuse—of Byzantine Egypt and Syria, of the great Persian provinces to the east. With adequate competence, Muawiyah took over the joint office of Caesar and Chosroes and started the governmental wheels turning. He meant the Arabs to be the ruling class and effected this by appointment of Arabs as governors of provinces and court officials. The officers of the army and the bulk of the fighting men were, of course, Arabs. Apart from all this, Muawiyah largely employed Greeks and Persians in governmental positions, for which their superior education and imperial experience qualified them above the nomadic and mostly illiterate Arabs. John of Damascus and the poet Al-Akhtal may be mentioned among the highly placed and highly trusted Christian officials of Muawiyah.

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[65] *Koran,* Chap. VIII, p. 143. A magnificent carpet at Ctesiphon was actually cut up, that the Caliph's fifth part might be dispatched to him.

[66] This tribute varied in oppressiveness and in kind. In India, for instance, it took the form of a heavy poll tax levied on all Hindus by the fanatical Aurangzeb.

[67] Hussein, Ali's second son, was slain in 680. The descendants of Hassan and Hussein are respectively the Sherifs and the Seyyids of Moslem history. Their claims to the caliphate gave rise to the major sect of the Shias and have drenched Moslem lands in blood.

The whole Ommeyad Dynasty, in fact, was undistinguished for zeal for the Koran. They built mosques and in other ways subsidized Islam as the state religion, but checked the zealots who would have made of the empire a fanatical theocracy. They were doing well by themselves as luxurious oriental sovereigns and had no fervor to return for the sake of religious edification to the simple life of Mohammed and the first four caliphs. Their practical good sense showed them the unwisdom of hastily intruding the untried political theories of the Koran in the well-ordered Byzanto-Persian machinery of government. Even when the Abbasids liquidated the Ommeyads in 750, the governmental shift was still further away from Koranic and even from Arabic influence, for the new dynasts, besides being great admirers of Persian ways, made over the control of the military to the Turks.

Only tardily did Koranic teaching work to modify principles of government and lead to the growth of a civil polity properly Islamic. As has just been noted, the intemperate zeal of early believers who would have squeezed the conquered lands into the narrow Koranic mold was repressed. But there gradually emerged among sincere Moslems a learned caste of lawyer-theologians, who drew up a code of jurisprudence professedly based on Mohammed's teaching. "Professedly," because its sources were far from being purely Koranic. Much use was made of the luxuriant growth of "traditional" sayings of the prophet and his first companions. Again, following a rule akin to the notorious Buddhist dictum ("Whatever has been well said, has been said by the Buddha"), the Moslem doctors put into the mouths of the prophet and his companions much legislation which is too obviously Persian and Byzantine. The total result – the ideal code of government for a Moslem state – was never fully adopted in the caliphate. But influence at the court, increasing esteem for the scholarship of the lawyer-theologians, and above all the gradual fastening of Moslem cultural and religious ideas upon the conquered lands conspired to effect the actuation of much of the *fiqh* (ideal Moslem jurisprudence) and its transference to the statute books.[68]

In the Moslem state which thus evolved, the caliph was in temporal matters an absolute monarch. No Koranic precept determined this, but the exigencies of the times. In spiritual matters the caliph's position was quite anomalous. He did not make the pretense to direct divine illumination which had served Mohammed so well. Furthermore, as has been seen, the prophet did not define in any way the functions of his successor, even if we grant that he wanted Abu Bekr to hold that office. For the early age of Islam (approximately the century after Mohammed's death) the question of spiritual authority seemed as easy of solution as the like question seemed to the early Protestant Reformers. Was not the "divine" Koran the compendium of all needful instruction? The Moslems thought so for a time, as did the Reformers in the matter of the all-sufficiency of the Bible, but were to learn, even as they learned, that an exclusively book religion has no adequate rule of faith and conduct. The Koran was found to be silent or hopelessly obscure in many matters, especially when Moslems had passed from the simple nomadic culture, familiar to the book's author, to the higher and more complex cultures of the conquered lands. Upon the lawyer-theologians fell the task of evolving a theory of religious authority. Had the Ommeyads and Abbasids been as religiously edifying as the first four caliphs, doubtless the drift of theory would have been toward the investiture of the caliphate with supreme teaching authority. As it was, the right to teach was finally vested comfortably and vaguely in a kind of general consensus of the learned, akin to the consensus in which Judaism and Protestantism wishfully think to find unity of faith.[69] To the caliph were relegated no functions which could justify the appellation of Pope of Islam. What the caliph stands for in the structure of Islam may be appreciated from the brilliant analysis of Fr. Lammens:

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[68] Cf. H. Lammens, S.J., *Islam, Beliefs and Institutions* (Methuen, 1929), Chap. V.

> We come to the conclusion that there exists no Church in Islam, no sacerdotal hierarchy and no central See acting at once as director and preserver. . . . Ingenious orientalists, instead of asking what Islam thinks in the matter, have begun by assimilating the structure of the Muslim world to that of Christianity, and of the Ottoman Caliphate to the Roman Pontificate. This assimilation led them logically to endow the former with jurisdiction and spiritual supremacy over all Islam. . . . It would have been difficult to invent a theory more directly contrary to the teaching of Islam. Never has Sunni orthodoxy confused the Caliph with a Christian hierarch, Pope or Patriarch. Far from attributing to him spiritual prerogatives, it even denies him all doctrinal authority, including the power conceded to the lowest of the *ulema* (doctors of Koranic theology) of giving a *fatwa* (solution of a doctrinal difficulty). The Caliph always has been and still is nothing more than an advance sentinel watching at the door of Islam, not a Pontiff, but a lay defender of the Sharia (Koranic law). He is regarded as the mandatory of the community, whose duty it is to maintain intact the rules prescribed by the Koran and by its sanction to recall the faithful publicly to the respect due to the Canon Law. Thus the Czar in the old organization of the Russian Church and the King of England in the Anglican Church. He is the Vicar of the Prophet, but in temporal matters only. Having only an executive power, he has to maintain the cohesion of Islam within and to secure its defense and expansion without.[70]

The conversion to Islam of the peoples ruled by the caliph cannot be attributed to any single cause. It is not true, except in sporadic instances, that they had to make a choice of "Islam or the sword." The second member of the choice was according to Koranic teaching and the general practice: "the tribute." Undoubtedly, the prospect of escaping galling tribute and of gaining through apostasy perfect civil equality with their Arab conquerors moved great multitudes to profess: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet." The fortunes of different religious bodies varied. Zoroastrianism had always been a parasite of the Persian imperial power, and slowly died of anemia once that sustaining stem was cut away. The Christian Copts of Egypt, it has been seen, through hatred of Byzantium had co-operated in Amru's conquest of the Nile land; hence they enjoyed a status of cordial toleration and flourished. Records of Nestorian Christianity in the Tigris-Euphrates valley and eastward are meager, but its fate seems to have been first slow strangulation in an inhospitable Moslem atmosphere, then engulfment in the rude waves of Turks and Mongols. Against Roman Catholic and Greek (whether Orthodox or Uniate) the tradition of hatred and intolerance stems back to the earliest days of Islam's surge toward the west, when eastern and western Christian armies checked Islam's banners at the gates of Europe. Thereafter for eight centuries from opposite shores of the Mediterranean and the Bosporus the rival ideologies of Islam and of European Christianity either bristled at each other or engaged in ruthless war. In Moslem history books the Crusades are "merciless raids of the hordes of Europe"[71] directed against Islam's second holy city and its great centers of learning. It is small wonder, then, that the norm for the treatment of Christians in the western part of the Moslem empire became not the passages of the Koran which are conciliatory toward "the people of the book," but rather the occasional fierce denunciations in which Mohammed indulged. Intense dislike of the Christian name found expression in sporadic pogroms, in the steady pressure of civil and social ostracism, and in the prohibition of Christian missionary effort. The Church's missionaries added another chapter to its history of martyrdom as almost their only achievement in Moslem lands, while Moslems ceaselessly and not unsuccessfully labored to win proselytes from among their Christian fellow countrymen. Christian converts to the Koran who later relapsed were horribly butchered, while a

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[69] Cf. *The Religions of Democracy*, by Finkelstein, Ross, Brown (Devin Adair, 1941), pp. 27, 173.

[70] Lammens, *op. cit.*, pp. 107, 108.

[71] *Islam,* by Ameer Ali (London: Constable & Co., 1914), p. 72.

Moslem who turned Christian faced sure death or enslavement.

Sale's apology for Mohammed—that he replaced polytheism and idolatry by a monotheistic cult—may be approved only with due reservations. Insofar as the Koran diffused this much spiritual enlightenment over pagan Arabia and Zoroastrian Persia, a moderate service to religion may be acknowledged. Still, the gods of Arabia had played their part by the opening of the seventh century and were tottering off the stage. Had Mohammed not arisen, it is probable that Christianity would have taken over and won the Arabs to a more substantial hope than that held out in the pleasant illusions of the Meccan "prophet." Similarly, in the same seventh century the fire on Persian altars was flickering, coincidentally with the steady infiltration of Catholic and Nestorian Christianity into Mesopotamia and the Iranian plateau. In a word, though it be arguable that Koranic religion is better than the systems it replaced, Islam's triumph cast the shadow of the crescent across lands where the light of the Cross was promising to shine. Besides, Islam's empire stood as a barrier between Christendom and the Far East, to hinder for centuries the passage of the Gospel message to those distant shores.

A comparison of the state of society in lands whose civilization has been molded on the Koran with the state of society in countries of Christian culture can only lend emphasis to the preceding remarks. Without palliating the injustices and vice to be found among Christians, we point unwaveringly at the fair flowering of the Christian ethos in the integrity of family life, the worth and dignity of the individual, respect for women, solicitude for the poor and the afflicted, the life of consecration of priests and religious. Contrasted with these fruits of the Gospel teaching are the fruits the Koranic tree has gone on producing for twelve centuries. Polygamy has replaced the family by the harem, destroyed true respect for women, perverted the education of children. The women of the harem are forbidden all normal dealing with the outside world, may be beaten by their master, may be divorced by him with no reason given. Human slavery, which Christianity gradually mitigated and finally abolished, is still a recognized and flourishing institution in Moslem lands. This threefold canker—polygamy, divorce, slavery—has direct Koranic sanction, and any analogy between this and abuses that may arise in Christian society due to human frailty is out of order. "For, in proportion as Christianity exercises her legitimate influence, vice and intemperance will wane and vanish, and the higher morality pervade the whole body; while in Islam the deteriorating influences of polygamy, divorce and concubinage have been stereotyped for all time."[72]

Such "divine" sanction for indulgence in sexual matters must be reckoned among the reasons for the spread of Islam and for the hold which the religion has upon its adherents. In other regards, too, the Moslem is not called on to practice much mortification, nor are the requirements of cult and ritual burdensome. All in all, nature gets off easily enough in this life and looks comfortably forward to an abundance of natural satisfactions and delights in the "gardens of paradise." Moreover, the believer's assurance that he is in the right path is unshakable. The Koran, communicated by God to men through the last and greatest of His prophets, is His final revelation, "clarifying" and completing all that He has revealed in Old and New Testaments. To appreciate better how fatally Islam combines the flattering of nature with a smattering of the supernatural, a more detailed study of faith and religious duties must now be essayed.

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[72] *The Coran,* by Sir W. Muir (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1878), p. 62.

39. Mohammed's Own Creed

MOHAMMED'S philosophy of religion was simple. Just as there is only one God, so there has never been more than one true religion, the latter consisting in faith in God and submission to His will. To the protoparents of our race God revealed Himself and His behests directly. To succeeding generations, who are constantly setting up idols in His room, He sends prophets to teach anew His unity and to warn of His judgments. Though the dogmatic message of the prophets is always the same, God changes for different peoples and periods the ceremonial law and social ordinances. In Mohammed, however, revelation comes to a full stop, insofar as there will be no other prophet after him and as his Koran is a perennial and all-sufficient text on the divine nature and will.

God is thus knowable through revelation and faith. Mohammed also teaches that He may be known through reason.

> Of his signs one is that he has created you of dust, and behold you are become men spread over the face of the earth. . . . Of his signs others are that he showeth you the lightning, to strike terror and to give hope of rain, and that he sendeth down water from heaven and quickeneth thereby the earth after it hath been dead: verily here are signs unto people who understand. And of his signs this also is one, namely that the heaven and the earth stand firm at command: hereafter, when he shall call you out of the earth at one summons, behold ye shall come forth.[73]

With tireless reiteration the evidences of divine power and all-ruling providence are dwelt upon — the heavenly bodies in their ordered course, the changes of the seasons, tides and favoring winds at sea, the fruitfulness of the date palm, the increase of the flocks. God's knowledge equals His power.

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[73] *Koran,* Chap. LXXX, p. 332.

> God knoweth whatever is in heaven and in earth. There is no private discourse among three persons, but he is the fourth of them.[74]
>
> Verily thy Lord knoweth what their breasts conceal and what they discover: and there is nothing hidden in heaven or on earth, but it is written in a clear book.[75]
>
> He knoweth the secrets of futurity; and he does not communicate his secrets unto anyone, except an apostle in whom he is well pleased.[76]

His decrees are unalterable, yet Mohammed's favorite name for Him is "The Merciful." On the question of predestination, there can be no doubt of Mohammed's mind, for he insists that the unalterable divine decrees predeterminate everything. In this he does not borrow from Jewish or Christian sources, but merely puts Allah in the place of the Fate (the Apportioner) of Arab paganism. Even in the submission (*islam*) which belongs to the essence of his doctrine and in the patience which he counsels in adversity, there is more of fatalism than of resignation to a wise and loving providence. Synonyms for believer and unbeliever respectively are "the rightly directed" and "the man not rightly directed," with the connotation that Allah leads aright or astray. Allah has settled it all long ago.

> If we had pleased we had certainly given unto every soul its direction; but the word that has proceeded from me must necessarily be fulfilled, when I said: Verily I will fill hell with genii and men altogether.[77]

The number of believers and of unbelievers is also fixed, for "one of you is predestined to be an unbeliever, and another of you is predestined to be a believer."[78] The whole world might have been brought to the light, but Allah wished otherwise.

> If God had pleased, he had made them all of one religion; but he leadeth whom he pleaseth into his mercy; and the unjust shall have no patron or helper.[79]

Hearts are hardened by Allah, lest they hear the message of salvation.

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[74] *Ibid.*, Chap. LVIII, p. 442.

[75] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXVIII, p. 315.

[76] *Ibid.*, Chap. LXXII, p. 468.

[77] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXXII, p. 339.

[78] *Ibid.*, Chap. LXIV, p. 452.

[79] *Ibid.*, Chap. XLII, p. 393.

> When thou readeth the Koran, we place between thee and those who believe not in the life to come a dark veil; and we put coverings over their hearts, lest they should understand it, and in their ears thickness of hearing.[80]

The prophet is therefore to be without anxiety.

> Verily God will cause to err whom he pleaseth, and will direct whom he pleaseth. Let not thy soul therefore be spent in sighs for their sakes on account of their obstinacy.[81]

Mohammed's admission of free will really does not brighten up this picture of black predestination. The admission must rather be taken as a spontaneous conclusion of his practical mind, not as any thesis that salvation or damnation is dependent upon man's own actions.

From his garbled knowledge of Christian doctrine Mohammed judged that Christians worshiped three gods, and of course inveighed against them on this head. From the Scripture he borrowed the term "Word" and applied it to Christ to mean that He was a vehicle of God's revelation (Chap. III, p. 40). Likewise, his imagination was intrigued by the scriptural use of the term "Holy Spirit," so he himself used it in various connections, but always without theological precision. Christ, he said, "was strengthened by the holy spirit" (Chap. II, p. 12). Again Christ was "a spirit proceeding from God" (Chap. IV, p. 80). If we may trust later Mohammedan commentators, he used "Holy Spirit" as a synonym for Gabriel, the angel of revelation. (Another curious aberration of Mohammed's ill-informed mind is his charge that the Jews worshiped Ezra as a second God.)

The Koran speaks respectfully of Jesus and His Mother. The account of them is a weird medley of genuine Gospel data and apocrypha. The virgin birth is several times asserted. From a source seemingly connected with the second-century heretic Basilides, Mohammed adopts (Chap. III, p. 42) the legend that Jesus was not crucified, another who resembled him being substituted for Him. The text of the Koran is obscure on the fact of His death, possibly meaning that He was translated alive into heaven. There is nothing on Resurrection apparitions. "He shall be a sign of the approach of the last hour" (Chap. XLIII, p. 400): this the commentators expand to mean that Jesus will descend to earth and slay antichrist.

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[80] *Ibid.*, Chap. XVII, p. 231.
[81] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXXV, p. 358.

Fall and redemption are neither Koranic nor later Islamic doctrines. What Mohammed has on the evil spirit and our first parents is a preposterous blend of Genesis, Talmudic legend, and seemingly Zoroastrian Dualism. Eblis (Satan) refuses to adore Adam and is sentenced to eternal punishment, but begs to be respited until the end of the world (Chap. VII, p. 117). His request being granted, he declares his intention of working his spite on Adam and Eve, which he accordingly does by the temptation of the forbidden fruit. God forgives them, but they must move out of paradise. This is about as deeply as Mohammed had penetrated the doctrine of original sin. Of a theology of redemption, the Koran offers not a trace.

Fragments here and there in the Koran enable us to construct something resembling a doctrine on grace. Faith, first, is a gift which God gives or denies. Although the analogy must not be drawn too closely, faith in Allah and His prophet is the Moslem's sanctifying grace. He can lose heaven only by giving up this faith and putting himself in the *massa damnata* of unbelievers. Even if he die with all other sins (except infidelity) on his soul, he will still be admitted to paradise after a period of purgation. Repentance *inter vivos* easily secures Allah's pardon for transgressions. The angels, too, are constantly asking Allah to pardon repentant Moslems (Chap. XL, p. 383). Favors ("actual graces") all come from Allah and are to be asked for in prayer, though it must be admitted that the blessings sought are either material or of a low grade of spirituality. Neither Mohammed nor any good Moslem could conceivably petition for poverty of spirit, cleanness of heart, or meekness. Allah has no such graces to dispense.

Eschatology in the Koran is a theme second in importance only to monotheism. Twice Gabriel will sound his trumpet, causing all living men to expire at the first blast, bringing them to life again at the second (Chap. XXXIX, p. 382). All men will then rise from their graves and be brought by the angels for judgment before Allah.[82] He will expose to them the written record of their deeds, will interrogate them, even allow them to argue with him. Curiously enough, the idols will be called up as witnesses against their worshipers. Significantly, the one point which will be decisive of the soul's eternal lot will be, not charity as in the true prophecy of the Last Day, but faith in Allah's unity. The pains of hell, into which the angels will hurl the damned, will be physical—boiling water, nauseous food, fire, beating (Chaps. XXII, p. 275, and LVI, p. 436). There is no mention of the pain of loss, the only lament of the damned being that their bodies are tormented.

So true is the statement that the paradise described in the Koran is a place of sensual enjoyments, that no text can be adduced to prove that the paradisiacs will be in any degree interested in the knowledge and love of God. The only thing Allah has to do with Mohammed's paradise is that he creates it and turns it over in fee simple to its human owners. He seemingly then goes elsewhere, fully quit of the transaction. What the Moslem who has kept the faith looks forward to (if we speak of Mohammed's own "revelation" and not of the theories of some of Islam's apologetes) is about the following.

> The description of paradise, which is promised unto the pious: therein are rivers of incorruptible water and rivers of milk, the taste whereof changeth not and rivers of wine pleasant unto those who drink; and rivers of clarified honey: and therein shall they have plenty of all kinds of fruits.[83]
>
> The pious shall dwell amidst gardens and pleasures, delighting themselves in what their Lord shall have given them, and their Lord shall deliver them from the pains of hell. And it shall be said unto them: Eat and drink with easy digestion. . . . And we will give them fruits in abundance and flesh of the kinds which they shall desire. They shall present unto one another therein a cup of wine, wherein there shall be no vain discourse nor any incitement to wickedness. And youths appointed to attend them shall go round them, beautiful as pearls hidden in their shells.[84]

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[82] Mohammed's heaven and hell demand that soul and body be united, his doctrine in no way allowing of the possibility that a separated soul could enjoy or suffer. He teaches that the union of soul and body will follow the general resurrection, leaving to later Moslem theologians the task of speculating about the state of the soul between death and the resurrection.

[83] *Koran,* Chap. XLVII, p. 411.

[84] *Ibid.,* Chap. LII, p. 425.

The happy Moslems will recline on couches of gold set with precious stones, covered with thick silk. Of the banquet, which will never produce satiety, we read:

> And their attendants shall go round about unto them with vessels of silver and goblets and bottles of silver shining like glass. They shall determine the measure thereof by their wish. And therein shall they be given to drink of wine mixed with the water of Zenjebil.[85]

The last word means "ginger," of whose flavor the Arab is very fond. Among the heavenly banqueters "shall be many of the former religions and many of the latter," which phrase, in the light of Mohammed's theory of salvation, means that those who have followed the prophets who preceded him will receive the same reward as Moslems. Table talk will consist largely of mutual congratulations over having had the good sense to hearken to Allah's messengers and so winning through to their present felicity. At will, they may look down into hell and recognize there those who had troubled them and tried to seduce them from monotheism. Still others joys are at hand.

> Near them shall lie the virgins of paradise, refraining their looks from beholding any besides their spouses, having large black eyes, and resembling the eggs of an ostrich covered with feathers from the dust.[86]

> Verily we have created the damsels of paradise by a peculiar creation: and we have made them virgins, beloved of their husbands, of equal age with them; for the delight of the companions of the right hand.[87]

These are the Houris (*Hur al oyun,* signifying Mohammed's description of their large, black eyes). "Of equal age with their spouses" means that all in paradise will be perpetually in vigorous youth. Sale says that the simile of the ostrich egg expresses the Arab's ideal of a beautiful complexion. Elsewhere Mohammed says that the Houris will have "complexions like rubies and pearls." Nothing is said of a Moslem's mortal harem following him into paradise, only the Houris being mentioned. Mohammed, however, explicitly teaches that there are heavenly joys for faithful women.

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[85] *Ibid.,* Chap. LXXVI, p. 475.
[86] *Ibid.,* Chap. XXXVII, p. 367.
[87] *Ibid.,* Chap. LVI, p. 436.

> Whoso doth good works, whether he be male or female, and is a true believer; they shall be admitted into paradise, and shall not in the least be unjustly dealt with.[88]

The presumption is that there will be a separate paradise for women, but no description of it is forthcoming.

The Koranic code of morals, though definitely inferior to that of the Gospels, undoubtedly sets a standard higher than that of Arab paganism. Reprobated, as a matter of course, are idolatry, rash calling on the name of Allah in oaths, breaking of vows. Of filial duty the prophet speaks affectingly.

> Thy Lord hath commanded that ye worship none besides him; and that ye show kindness unto your parents, whether the one of them or both of them attain to old age. Wherefore, say not unto them: Fie on you! neither reproach them, but speak respectfully unto them; and submit to behave humbly towards them out of tender affection, and say: O Lord, have mercy on them both, as they nursed me when I was little.[89]

Immemorial Semitic legislation is the basis of Koran's frequent precepts forbidding murder and bodily injury. The right of the kin of a murdered man to slay the murderer, the substitution in certain circumstances of pecuniary reparation, the principle of eye for eye and tooth for tooth; all these Semitic ideas appear. Most notable variation is that in cases involving a believer and an unbeliever, the former is treated with indulgence and the latter with added severity. Against the Moslem murderer of a fellow believer Allah fulminates.

> Whoso killeth a believer designedly, his reward shall be hell; he shall remain therein forever; and God shall be angry with him and shall curse him and shall prepare for him a great punishment.[90]

Although we read (Chap. XVII, p. 230): "Draw not near unto fornication; for it is wickedness and an evil way," from other passages we can conclude that Allah regards sins of the flesh with the indulgence of a fond mother toward an infant who pilfers sweetmeats. "God is minded to make his religion light unto you: for man was created weak" (Chap. IV, p. 64). Fornicators and sodomites are to be lightly punished, "but if they repent and amend, let them both alone; for God is easy to be reconciled and merciful" (Chap. IV, p. 62). Only upon a member of the harem, who infringes her master's rights by adultery, does severe punishment fall, for she must be immured and starved to death (Chap. IV, p. 61). Mohammed has nothing to say concerning solitary vice and sins of thought or desire.

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[88] *Ibid.*, Chap. IV, p. 75.
[89] *Ibid.*, Chap. XVII, p. 229.
[90] *Ibid.*, Chap. IV, p. 72.

Theft is harshly dealt with.

> If a man or a woman steal, cut off their hands in retribution for that which they have committed. This is an exemplary punishment appointed by God; and God is mighty and wise.[91]

A strong passage is leveled against slander, calumny, and false suspicions.

> O true believers, let not men laugh other men to scorn, who peradventure are better than themselves: neither let women laugh other women to scorn, who may possibly be better than themselves. Neither defame one another; nor call one another by opprobrious names. An ill name it is to be charged with wickedness after having embraced the faith: and whoso repenteth not, they will be the evil doers. O true believers, carefully avoid entertaining a suspicion against another: for some suspicions are a crime. Inquire not too curiously into another's failings; neither let the one of you speak ill of another in his absence. Would any of you desire to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely ye would abhor it.[92]

Five cardinal duties, commonly called The Five Pillars of Islam, are incumbent on all believers. They are Faith, Prayer, Almsgiving, Fasting, and Pilgrimage. Enough has been said of faith. The Koran is edifyingly insistent on the general necessity of prayer, "for prayer preserveth a man from filthy crimes and from that which is blameable; and the remembering of God is surely a most important duty" (Chap. XXIX, p. 328). The foundation is also laid for the later highly stereotyped daily prayer of the Moslem world, when Mohammed is commanded: "Celebrate the praise of thy Lord before the rising of the sun, and before the setting thereof, and praise him in the hours of the night and in the extremities of the day" (Chap. XX, p. 264). Again: "Wherefore glorify God when the evening overtaketh you and when you rise in the morning: and unto him be praise in heaven and earth; and at sunset and when ye rest at noon" (Chap. XXX, p. 331). Five times were soon established by custom based upon these texts—early morning, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and evening before retiring.

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[91] *Ibid.,* Chap. V, p. 86.
[92] *Ibid.,* Chap. XLIX, p. 419.

Where there is a mosque, the muezzin shortly before each hour for prayer mounts the minaret and cries: "Allah is great. I testify there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is the messenger of Allah. Come to prayer; come to worship. Allah is great. There is no God but Allah." At this summons, whose impressiveness all travelers attest, the faithful Moslem performs his ablutions, that he may be legally clean, washing his face, hands and forearms, feet and ankles. In default of water, he may use clean sand for the purpose. Then, repairing to the mosque—or wherever he chooses, if there be no mosque—he enters on prayer, facing toward Mecca. Twice at least during his devotions he bows profoundly, twice prostrates himself and touches his forehead to the ground. Though he is allowed to interpolate as much of the Koran as he wishes during his prayer, he must observe the following. First, he recites: "Allah Akbar." Second, he says or reads the short first chapter of the Koran, namely:

> Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures, the most merciful, the king of the day of judgement. Thee do we worship, and of thee do we beg assistance. Direct us in the right way, in the way of those to whom thou hast been gracious; not of those against whom thou art incensed, nor of those who go astray.

Then: "There is no God but Allah; and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah." There follows an invocation of blessings on the head of the prophet. If there be others present, as in the mosque, the Moslem bows to right and left and calls down blessings on them also, and so concludes his prayer.

A Friday noon service is led by the *Iman* (which term corresponds roughly to the Protestant "elder") in the mosque, provided there be forty men (no women) in attendance. The mosque itself, incidentally, resembles closely a church of the Byzantine style, the difference being the absence of altar, statues, and pictures. There is always a niche in the wall marking the direction of Mecca.[93] On Friday, then, the Iman mounts the pulpit and delivers two sermons, during the course of which he mentions the sovereign.[94] The usual stereotyped prayer is then recited under the Iman's leadership and the Moslems go back to their usual avocations, since the idea of abstention from secular occupations on the weekly holyday is foreign to Islam. The devotional and liturgical sterility of Islam should by this time be evident.

All Moslems of both sexes from the beginning of their fifteenth year must fast during the month of Ramadan. Since the religious year, according to Mohammed's own direction, follows the system of lunar months, Ramadan every thirty-three years makes the complete circuit of the seasons. To the prophet himself, too, must be ascribed the precept of the fast.

> O true believers, a fast is ordained you, as it was ordained to those before you, that you may fear God. A certain number of days shall you fast; but he among you who shall be sick or on a journey, shall fast an equal number of other days. And those who can keep it and do not, must redeem their neglect by maintaining of a poor man. And he who voluntarily dealeth better with the poor man than he is obliged, this shall be better for him. But if you fast, it will be better for you, if you knew it. The month of Ramadan shall you fast, in which the Koran was sent down from heaven, a direction unto men and declarations of direction and the distinction between good and evil. Therefore, let him among you who shall be present in this month, fast the same month; but he who shall be sick or on a journey, shall fast the like number of other days. God would make this an ease unto you and would not make it a difficulty unto you, that you may fulfill the number of

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[93] The change of the *quibla* or direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca followed Mohammed's break with Jews and Christians: it was also symptomatic of his determination to give Islam a great Holy City of its own.

[94] When the Moslem world was politically united, the sovereign was of course the caliph. Now there is a great diversity of practice in the matter. In Morocco the sultan is named in prayer of the Iman on Fridays; in Egypt, King Farouk; in Afghanistan the formula is "the Emir of Afghanistan and the other Moslem Emirs"; Turkey has dropped the formula; other countries have dropped it provisionally, i.e., until the question of who is caliph can be settled. It goes without saying that no Christian king, e.g., George VI in India, would ever be mentioned. Again, the formula was never understood to be a profession of spiritual submission to the caliph, as is the case of the *Pro Papa* of Catholics.

> days and glorify God, for that he hath directed you, and that you may give thanks.[95]

It can be seen that the motives of mortification and of satisfaction for sin are not mentioned except insofar as they are perhaps included in the phrase "that you may fear God." Father Power is of opinion that the fasting month was instituted in imitation of the Christian Lent. Why Ramadan was chosen for the time is evident from the text. Every day during this month the Moslem from sunrise to sunset abstains from all food and drink, from smoking and perfume, from visiting his harem. All of these solaces are licit during the night. It is customary in populous centers for a cannon shot to warn the faithful about two hours before sunrise to refresh themselves before the rigors of the day. The fast begins "when there is enough light to distinguish a black thread from a white," according to doctors of the law. The rules for dispensation and commutation given in the above text are obviously quite reasonable.

Equally explicit is the Koranic injunction: "Pay your legal alms" (Chap. II, p. 6). The supposition is that the legal rate was sufficiently known for the time being and that Mohammed did not wish to establish irrevocably what percentage of a man's wealth was due. A reward is promised for almsgiving.

> Believe in God and his apostle, and lay out in alms a part of the wealth whereof God hath made you inheritors: for unto such of you as believe and bestow alms, shall be given a great reward.[96]

And a dire punishment for remissness in almsgiving.

> Contribute out of your substance toward the defense of the religion of God, and throw not yourselves with your own hands into perdition.[97]

The term *zakat* used for almsgiving means "purification," so that the Jewish and Christian teaching that almsgiving atones for sin seems indicated here. Two historical reasons also influenced the prophet in this matter. At Mecca the poor were treated very shabbily by the well-to-do, and Mohammed, who had known nearpenury in his youth, naturally had great sympathy. Then, too, many of his early converts were indigent, and prudence dictated that he insist that the more prosperous of his followers help their coreligionists. After the Hejira, he included under the name of alms contributions to equip his little army. Very soon after his death, his successors still further expanded the concepts. They imposed prorated taxes on the faithful and applied them to poor relief, to war, and to general governmental expenses.

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[95] *Koran,* Chap. II, pp. 21, 22.

[96] *Ibid.,* Chap. LVII, p. 438.

[97] *Ibid.,* Chap. II, p. 23.

Mohammed, as Meccan born and raised, was fanatically loyal to the Kaaba stone and the traditions and customs which clustered about it. Being a Koreish, too, he belonged to the very tribe which gloried in the custody of this pan-Arabic shrine. To break with this darling cult of his tribe and nation when he launched his religious movement, he would have needed a true inspiration such as moved Abraham to depart from Haran. His determination to make the Kaaba cult a pillar of Islam was strengthened as his political plans began to take shape at Medina. The latter town, of which he was now prince, though fairly prosperous due to the fertility of its site, was inland and off the great caravan route. He accordingly planned to take Mecca and rule there as Prince-Prophet of all Arabia. In pursuance of his plan he concocted the revelations which incorporate the Kaaba cult into Islam.

Judging from a stone as the object of worship, from the sacred spring, from the perambulation, from the race between Saafa and Merwa, from the apotropaic rite of casting stones in the valley of Mina, historians of religion conclude that the cult was in origin purely pagan. At the beginning of the seventh century, when Mohammed came on the scene, the place itself, the stone, and the ceremonies were associated—and had been associated for a longer period than anyone is qualified to determine—with the story of Abraham. The Arabs believed that they were descended from Abraham through Ishmael. Ishmael's progeny, so they say, blended in Arabia with an older Semitic stock (descended from Jectan, the great-grandson of Sem) to form the proud Arabian race. To increase the plausibility of the genealogy, the Abraham story with apocryphal embellishments was transferred to the neighborhood of Mecca, where he was said to have been bidden to sacrifice Ishmael (*sic!*), to have cast out Hagar, and so on. All this fitted in nicely with Mohammed's plan, for Abraham "was the first Moslem," according to him, and being their great ancestor was a *persona grata* to the Arabs whom he wished to win to Islam. He therefore incorporated into his "revelations" the Arabic Abraham. He even added apocrypha of his own, such as Hagar wandering distractedly in her search for water between the hills Saafa and Merwa. The heterogeneous sources from which Mohammed borrowed his religion have been indicated, so that his adaptation of the Kaaba cult and the Abraham story to his purposes need not surprise.

On the Kaaba shrine we read as follows:

> Verily the first house appointed men to worship in was that which was in Becca (Mecca); blessed and a direction to all creatures. Therein are manifest signs: the place wherein Abraham stood; and whoever entereth therein shall be safe. And it is a duty toward God incumbent on those who are able to go thither, to visit this house.[98]

The past tense in the first sentence indicates Mohammed's knowledge of the legend that there was an antediluvian house, taken up to heaven together with the stone at the time of that catastrophe. Abraham and Ishmael built a new house directly below the point where the original stood in heaven, and Allah sent down the stone. Of the rebuilding the Koran says:

> And we appointed the holy house of Mecca to be a place of resort for mankind and a place of security and said: Take the station of Abraham for a place of prayer. And we covenanted with Abraham and Ishmael that they should cleanse my house for them that compass it. And Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundation of the house, saying: Lord, make us also resigned unto thee and our posterity a people resigned unto thee, and show us our holy ceremonies.[99]

The "station of Abraham" is a stone still revered at Mecca, on which is supposed to be the footprint of Abraham. It is strange that Mohammed does not explicitly mention the Kaaba stone itself. The reason is probably that he knew what sense the people attached to it and did not think it necessary to enlarge on it, but rather chose to stress the holy house as a monotheistic temple. The legend —whether it antedates Islam or not, cannot be said—is that the

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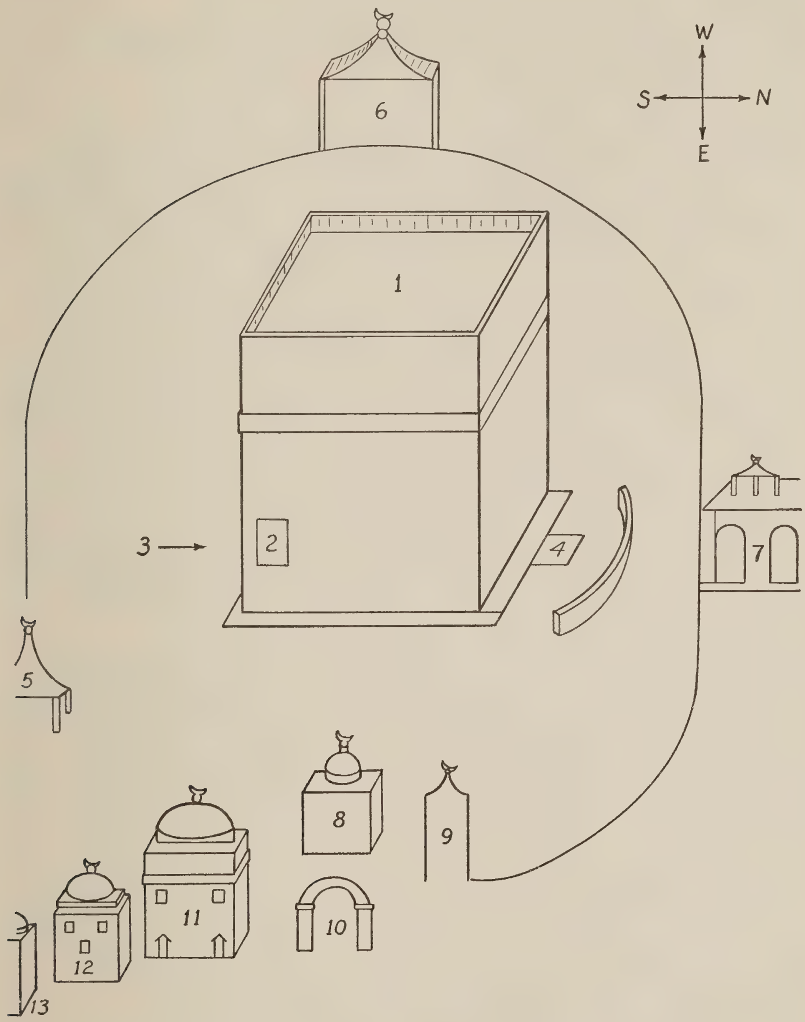
[98] *Ibid.*, Chap. III, p. 47.

[99] *Ibid.*, Chap. II, p. 16.

Kaaba stone was a stone of paradise which fell down along with Adam. (Incidentally sites are shown in the vicinity of Mecca supposedly connected with Adam and Eve: three hilltops across



1. Beit Allah; 2. Kaaba Stone; 3. Door; 4. Sepulcher of Ishmael; 5. Station of *Hanbalites;* 6. of *Malekites;* 7. of *Hanifites;* 8. of *Shafites* and Place of Abraham; 9. The Pulpit; 10. Old Gate; 11. Well of Zemzem; 12. Treasury; 13. Cupola of Al Abbas.

which mother Eve lay stunned and prostrate after being hurled from paradise; a hill where Adam found her after a search of some hundreds of years.)

Mohammed prescribes in the Koran most of the observances of the pilgrimage; the rest he abrogated by example, when shortly before his death, as has been seen, he solemnly performed the pilgrimage. In the Koran we have:

> Perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and the visitation of God. . . . Shave not your heads till your offerings reach the place of sacrifice. . . . He who findeth not anything to offer, shall fast three days during the pilgrimage and seven when ye are returned: they shall be ten days complete. . . . The pilgrimage must be performed in the known months (Shawal, Dhulkaada, Dhulhaaja). Whosoever therefore purposeth to go on a pilgrimage therein, let him not know a woman, nor transgress, nor quarrel in the pilgrimage. . . . Make provision for your journey, but the best provision is piety; and fear me, O ye of understanding. It shall be no crime, if ye seek an increase from your Lord by trading during the pilgrimage. And when ye go in procession from Arafat (the place where Adam found Eve), remember God near the holy monument (where Mohammed received extraordinary revelations). . . . Remember God the appointed number of days; but if in any haste to depart from the valley of Mina in two days, it shall be no crime in you (in the valley of Mina the victims were sacrificed).[1]

A coherent account of the pilgrimage may now be attempted. The holiest month in which to make it is Dhulkaada, and the holiest days from the first to the tenth of that month. Huge pilgrimages start from Cairo, Damascus, and Bagdad, often led by the respective rulers of those cities. Other pilgrimages come from all points of the compass, overland or by sea to the ports of Medina and Mecca (Yambo and Jodda). By a custom dating back to the days when the territory about the holy places was infested by brigands, the pilgrims converge on some center out of the danger zone and wait until their number is really formidable, then make the last stages under escort of a body of troops.

When still some distance from Mecca, the Moslem changes his traveling garb for the proper pilgrim costume. About his loins he wraps a length of white cloth, drapes a second over his shoulders, and removes his turban, for he must go bareheaded, unless the sun's rays be wholly unbearable. He must remain so attired throughout the holy ceremonies, while for the same period he must remain chaste, avoid obscene language, abstain from quarreling, and shed no blood of man or animal. Proceeding on their way, the pilgrims at last come in sight of the holy city and give vent to their intense religious emotions by prostrations and shouts of: *Labbayk, Allahumma, Labbayk* ("I come, O Allah, I come"). The rest of the way is covered at the best possible speed, to the accompaniment of the same glad cry.

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[1] *Ibid.*, Chap. II, p. 23.

Essential pilgrimage ceremonies start at the Black Stone, set in the wall of the Kaaba. This the pilgrim kisses before compassing the holy house seven times, thrice with a sprightly gait, four times meditatively. It is not obligatory to enter the Kaaba (Mohammed himself regretted having done so on his last pilgrimage, because he feared that his example might seem to found an obligation). However, the devout Moslem will rarely omit doing so, even at the serious inconvenience of waiting until the officials see fit to open up and of pushing his way through the suffocating crowd of devotees. Within there is only a large windowless room lighted by lamps which are strung between the three pillars that hold up the roof. The pilgrim must, however, enter the building which houses the well of Zemzem (Hagar's Well) and drink some of the bitter water to wash away all his sins. Observances in Mecca proper conclude with running the course between Merwa and Saafa (two hills on which idols were originally set up). This he does seven times, now running, now walking, now pausing and peering about as if in search of something. He is supposed to be imitating Hagar in her distracted search of water for the dying Ishmael.

The next day begins the really exhausting part of his religious devoir. He must march twelve miles out of the city to Mount Arafat (where Adam found Eve). After sunset prayer here, there will be a sermon preached by an Iman mounted on a camel. That same night he spends reading the Koran and praying at near-by Mount Mozdalifa. Very early the following morning he and his fellow devotees are on the march to the Valley of Mina. En route they visit the spot, Mashar al Horam, where Mohammed had an ecstasy. Entering the valley, every man gathers seven stones and shortly hurls them at the Devil (an oddly shaped formation of rock), as Abraham at this spot had stoned him for trying to dissuade him from going ahead with preparations to sacrifice Ishmael. With a tumultuous rush the pilgrims now pour into the valley. In the course of the centuries the floor of this valley has been sown with the remains of millions of sacrificed sheep, goats, kine, and camels. The stench is noisome, while of course the place has bred countless pestilences among the pilgrims. However, at the present day some provisions have been made to dispose of the carcasses and to scatter disinfectants. Here, at any rate, our pilgrim invokes Allah's name over his victim, kills it, and cooks the flesh. If he be too poor to afford a victim, he will share fully in the banquets of others, but must compensate for the lack of a personal sacrifice in the manner indicated on page 324.

Three days are devoted to feasting in the Valley of Mina, during which the pilgrim puts off his pilgrim garb, shaves head and beard, pares his nails, and buries these superfluities. There is no obligation to return to Mecca, as the pilgrimage concludes with the sacrifices, but very many will of course go back to feast their eyes on the holy places before departing for home.

40. Schools of Thought and Sects

MOSLEMS accept quite literally Mohammed's claims of transcendent worth for the Koran. Neither men nor jinn, even if they pooled their efforts, could produce a book like it. From the throne of Allah Gabriel brought it down and revealed it to Allah's prophet, to complete the previous scriptures and to close revelation for all time. It is "an explanation of everything necessary both as to faith and practice" (Chap. XVI, p. 221). No wonder that Moslem scholars dispute learnedly on the liceity of translating the divine Koran out of the original Arabic; that unbelievers who have shown irreverence for the book have been fanatically butchered; that the death penalty was decreed against anyone who denied that every copy of the Koran was in the strictly literal sense an uncreated and eternal book. Before the Moslem sets to reading, he performs the same ablutions as before prayer, to conform to the prophet's own injunction which is inscribed on the cover: "None shall touch this book, except those who are clean."

All this was and is very well for the unthinkingly devout. Mohammed did his best to meet the needs of his evolving commonwealth as they arose, concocting "revelations" to settle disputes on belief and practice as they were brought to him. But he lacked both the leisure and the vision necessary to formulate a code coherent and comprehensive enough to serve as a constitution for the new state. A clever politician, he showed himself ready to compromise in matters other than his few fundamental doctrines and ordinances, going so far even as to abrogate by new "revelations" what he had previously taught. Counting on several decades of undiminished vigor and growing prestige, he planned to play his cards skillfully, keep his ear to the ground, and accommodate his final blueprint for Islam to the shift of events and the currents of popular feeling. His boast that the Koran "is an explanation of everything necessary both as to faith and practice" he doubtless hoped to make good of some final edition in which earlier gaucheries would be abrogated, inconsistencies softened, and the mature conclusions of later political experience incorporated.

After his death, whatever points the Koran definitely settled were unquestioned and passed into the permanent structure of Islam, e.g., the pilgrimage observances noted in the preceding chapter. Difficulties, however, speedily arose, the first of which seems to have been in regard to the authentic text itself. Numerous copies of longer or shorter portions of Mohammed's prophetic utterances were cherished by his followers and were not altogether in agreement. Osman, third caliph, in the middle of the seventh century commissioned Zeid, Mohammed's freedman, to collate the authentic text. Shortly afterward a revision was made, which seems to have consisted in nothing more than to arrange Zeid's material into the present one hundred and fourteen chapters.

The deficiencies of even this "canonical" text were soon apparent, and Moslems turned instinctively to tradition to learn Mohammed's mind on questions not treated or left obscure in the book. Besides the prophet's wives and more famous lieutenants such as Omar and Ali, there survived literally thousands who had known him during the twenty years of his prophetic career. What had he said in preaching and controversy? What answers had he given when consulted on cases of conscience? What ways of acting had he sanctioned among his followers by commendation or tacit approval? What had he taught by his daily example? The answers of the "companions of the prophet" were carefully written down and were accepted as of equal authority with the Koran, inasmuch as they came from the same "divinely inspired" source. Each *hadith* (narrative of what Mohammed had said or done) consisted of the *matn* (narrative proper) and the *isnad* (name or names of those who vouched for it). With the eagerness to learn everything, the desire to secure support for one's own opinions, and the innate human love of romancing, the number of these hadiths soon reached astronomical figures. Further confusion arose from the admission of chains of witnesses. For instance, a hadith of the eighth century would read: "Abdullah says that he heard from Yezid that Hassan asserted that he once heard Ali say that the Prophet declared: 'After my death, the true believers will be ruled by the descendants of Fatima.'" For two hundred and fifty years production of hadiths was pushed enthusiastically and uncritically, until by the middle of the ninth century there had been put into Mohammed's mouth precepts concerning all conceivable details of religious practice, while his historical figure had been transformed into that of a thaumaturgus, seer, and political oracle.

Attempts were made to check this luxuriant growth, but not until the day of Bukhari (d. 870) and Muslim (d. 874) was progress made. These canonists in their classic books arranged the hadiths according to subject matter, with a view to affording other canonists an easily accessible source book. Though, at least in the judgment of non-Moslem scholars, they admitted as authentic a great body of suspect tradition, they still rejected much and had some regard for historical verisimilitude in their selection. At any rate, their high reputation was sufficient thoroughly to check further legend-mongering and to stabilize the *Sunna* (tradition).

Koran and Sunna, then, are the remote rules of faith and practice. It is admitted that where neither of these supplies an explicit ruling, cases may be decided by analogy (*Qiyas*). Insofar as there is any living teaching authority, it resides in the universal consent (*Ijma*) of canonists (*Ulema*). The Ulema, nowadays, has some systematic course of studies and receives a kind of degree. As an individual, he is considered qualified to give individual solutions to inquirers, somewhat as a confessor or canonist does for a Catholic inquirer. Finally, when cases arise which cannot be solved from the four founts mentioned (Koran, Sunna, Qiyas, Ijma), recourse may be had to reason (*ra'y*). According to variety of emphasis on one or another of these five founts, there have arisen four schools of thought among Moslems. These schools are named respectively Hanifites, Hanbalites, Malikites, and Shafites from the names of four great doctors of the law. Every Moslem is obliged to ally himself to one of these four orthodox schools and to be guided in his religious practice by the Ulema of the school of his choice. He may, however, change over from one to another, much as a Thomist may turn coat and become a Molinist.

Heresy raised its head very soon in Islam. It was of two kinds: heresy on questions of dogma and heresy on the question of the right to the caliphate. The latter form of heresy, as it developed, went astray also on certain dogmatic points. Koranic doctrine naturally soon came into conflict with the philosophy of the Byzantine and Persian worlds. Five doctrines were specially challenged: the prophet's own prerogatives; the claim that the Koran was an eternal and uncreated book; absolute predestination; the attributes of Allah; Mohammed's picture of a corporeal resurrection and a sensual paradise. It would be wearisome to detail all the numerous "heretical" opinions, so we will outline merely the heretical mentality on these five doctrines (which surely are "hard sayings" for a balanced mind). That Mohammed was infallible and impeccable, as orthodox piety maintained, is a statement contradicted by the alterations he made in his teaching and by only too obvious moral lapses. An earthly book that can be handled and which wears out in time cannot be uncreated and eternal. Free will is altogether too certainly an agent in man's saving or damning himself to leave any plausibility in the Koranic doctrine of predestination. On the question of the Koran's picture of Allah, "heretical" philosophers asserted both that the attributes (the Merciful, the Knowing, the Powerful) made several gods of the One, and that the literalness of "Allah sitting on his heavenly throne," "forming man with his hands," "seeing with his eyes," was an absurd humanization of the divinity. Finally, the glaring eschatological contradiction of a paradise of sensual joys together with the difficulty of the soul's state while it awaits the last judgment led philosophy into an outright denial of corporeal resurrection.

The general name of all these doctrinal heretics is *Mutazilites* or Separatists, a name derived from the circumstance that one of the earliest of their number, Wasel Ebn Ata, walked out on his orthodox master Hasan of Basra. Orthodoxy's first great champion, Al Ashari, had nothing in his defensive arsenal save an absurdly literal interpretation of the Koranic text. Dying about 950, he left his intransigence as a prized heritage to Islamic theology. Even the Moslem Aquinas, Al Ghazali (d. 1111), stanchly maintained that the Koran could not be in error. When it came to explaining the book's inconsistencies, he found the task too much for him. Scholastic dialectic he used with great skill in his exegesis, but no subtle distinctions could avail to acquit the Koran of the serious charges noted in the preceding paragraph. To save the faith Al Ghazali demanded a genuine *sacrificium intellectus,* namely the acceptance of what is manifestly absurd just because it is "revealed" and stands in the inerrant Koran. The Moslem Aquinas was a man of deep learning and of even deeper piety, who was and is held in such reverence that the Moslem world thinks that he has said the last word and closed for good and all the inquiry into the sense of the Koranic text. In still another regard he has powerfully influenced Islam, for his teaching on love for Allah and on devotional practices is one of the chief sources of Mohammedan mysticism.

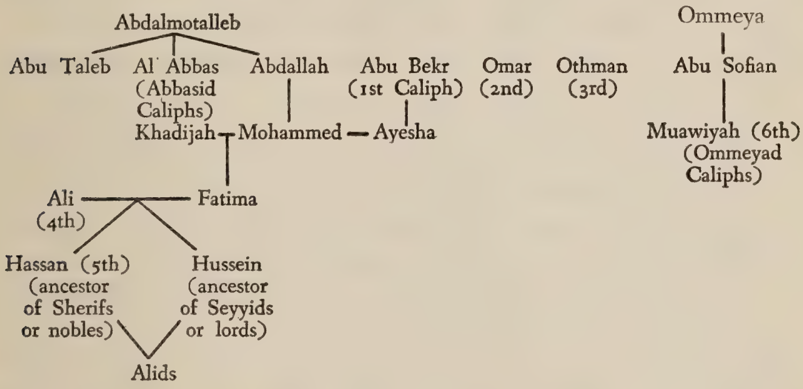
Sufism, the general name for Mohammedan mysticism, is derived from *sufa,* the woolen garment borrowed by the early mystics from the Christian ascetics of Syria and Egypt. The movement had for its remote source the human aspiration toward a purer life and a closer union with God. Proximately, Sufism arose as a reaction against the cold legalism of Islam and the stereotyped formalism of its prayer. Mohammed himself had not been without admiration for Christian monasticism, of which he says: "We put into the hearts of those that followed Jesus compassion and mercy; but as to the monastic state, they instituted the same (we did not prescribe it to them) only out of a desire to please God" (Chap. LVII, p. 440). During the Meccan period, too, he extols the lot of the poor as the special friends of Allah, and even advises a degree of meekness toward persecutors. His rise to power at Medina and his embitterment against Christians changed all this, and suggestions of the higher spirituality disappear from his teaching. Hence, though an elaborate later legend of an ascetical and mystical Mohammed was built up, he cannot be claimed as the spiritual father of the Sufis. Rather, these latter took over from Syrian and Egyptian monks not only the woolen garment, but their principles as well. The motivation of the Moslem ascetics, who begin to appear as hermits in the ninth century and later on as cenobites, was a familiar Christian one—unselfish love of God, repentance for sin and fear of the judgment, vanity of earthly goods and hopes. In their practice, too, we recognize the Christian forms of meditation, litanies, vigils, fasting, and surrender of possessions to the poor.

Al Ghazali outlined the theory and practice of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways. Examination of conscience should be made daily, faults marked in a notebook, and contrition elicited.

Subjects of meditation are to be sought in the Koran and in the sayings (*hadith*) of Mohammed. Meditation itself, entered upon with the suitable *compositio loci,* must be soberly regulated by the application of memory, intellect, and will; Al Ghazali explicitly warns against losing oneself in theological speculations. In all things the man desiring progress toward union with God must be ruled by a competent spiritual father. The possibility of such union Al Ghazali ardently maintained, while denying that it implied any monistic absorption of the mystic's personality into the divine personality.

It will be readily admitted that the Moslem doctor here prescribes a relatively excellent rule of spiritual living. He is indebted to Christian monasticism, as he frankly admits, for the most of it. Through him, then, some rivulets of spirituality flowed from Christianity through the arid land of Islamic legalism and formalism. Unfortunately the development of asceticism and mysticism departed considerably from the guiding lines which he traced. The monism against which he had inveighed had become known when Moslems contacted oriental philosophies and continued, despite his efforts, to allure Sufis with the flattering illusion of the identification of human personality with the divine. Pseudo-mystics multiplied and vied with one another in preposterous claims: "I am greater than Allah"; "How great is my glory"; "I am the Truth." On lower levels, the insane seizures of the dervishes testify to the same presumptuous belief that man becomes identical with God. For the legitimate means — self-denial, purity of heart, contemplation — by which union with God may be sought were substituted all manner of physical and imaginative stimuli. Concomitant with the conceit of divine absorption went contempt for the Koran's moral and ceremonial law. Islam possessed no spiritual authority (such as the Church possesses) to check these vagaries, and only occasionally did the indignation of the orthodox succeed in moving the caliph to punish some more offensive Sufi. From the twelfth century onward Sufis began to band together into fraternities (*turuq*) for the development and propagation of their ideas. The character of these fraternities varied greatly, some furnishing by their sincere piety a real contribution to Moslem spirituality, others being dens of fanatics dangerous both to religion and to the state. At present, in the judgment of Fr. Lammens, the fraternities are rapidly decaying, except in Africa, where the penchant of gentlemen of color for lodges and secret societies keeps them numerous and vigorous.

More important than the sects and schools already noticed is the division of the Moslem world into *Sunnites* (traditionalists or orthodox) and *Shiites* (partisans). Fundamentally, it is a division on the question whether the descendants of Ali and Fatima are the legitimate caliphs. Mohammed, as we have seen, did not speak his mind definitely in the matter, nor did Arab custom afford any clear solution. In tribal society, the office of sheik generally passed from father to son, but Mohammed had no son, and besides Islam was a society which transcended tribal bounds. The tribal law of succession, furthermore, received a severe shock when the first three caliphs were not even blood relations of the prophet. Perhaps a genealogical table will contribute to clarity.


Abdalmotalleb
Ommeya
Abu Taleb
Al Abbas (Abbasid Caliphs)
Abdallah
Abu Bekr (1st Caliph)
Omar (2nd)
Othman (3rd)
Abu Sofian
Khadijah
Mohammed
Ayesha
Muawiyah (6th) (Ommeyad Caliphs)
Ali (4th)
Fatima
Hassan (5th) (ancestor of Sherifs or nobles)
Hussein (ancestor of Seyyids or lords)
Alids

The forceful Muawiyah forced Hassan to abdicate the caliphate and had Hussein slain. About the descendants of these unfortunate princes gathered the reactionary or strictly Arabian party, who were displeased at the manner in which the Ommeyad caliphs were introducing Byzantine and Persian elements into the Islamic polity. Meanwhile the descendants of Mohammed's uncle, Al Abbas, who had moved into the old Persian domain and become strongly Persianized, assembled another party of opposition to the Ommeyads. Making common cause with the Alids, they succeeded in the year 750 in seizing the caliphate and held it until the year 1060. The Ommeyads were ruthlessly liquidated, though one scion of the line, Abderrhman, managed to escape and set himself up as an independent caliph in remote Cordova. As to the Alids, they had again to eat the bread of disappointment, for their allies the Abbasids showed no inclination to hand over the caliphate to Ali's descendants. Revolutions in favor of various Alid claimants continued throughout the Moslem world, but were repressed so long as the Abbasid Dynasty retained its vigor. About the year 1000, when the Abbasid caliph had become a puppet in the hands of Turkish mercenaries, North Africa and Egypt revolted successfully in favor of an Alid claimant named Obaidullah, who broke away from Bagdad and established the so-called Fatimid caliphate.

In this strife of human passions, as is their wont, politics and religion became inextricably interwoven. Devotion to Ali's cause led, perhaps under the influence of Indian religion, to the vagary that he was an incarnation (*avatar*) of Allah. A like notion grew up in regard to Hussein. Hassan, because of his weak-kneed resignation of his birthright, is no favorite of the Shiites. Further—and here we can conjecture Christian influence—Hussein's "martyrdom" at Kerbelah was interpreted to be a sacrifice of redemption for the faithful. Shiism even has an impious trinity, in which Mohammed represents revelation, Ali interpretation of the Koran, and Hussein redemption. A vast, tendentious tradition (*sunna*) has been built up, differing from the orthodox tradition in that the sayings (*hadith*) are framed to support the Shia position, and in that the names vouching for the sayings are all Alids or partisans of the Alids. Shiism has its own *ulema* (body of doctors or canonists) to interpret the Koran and tradition. Interpretation of the Koran is highly allegorical, for inasmuch as that document does not even mention Ali, Shia doctors torture out of the text all manner of veiled references to him and to his rights. Persecution by the Ommeyads and Abbasids has brought the Shiites to the doctrine of *kitman* or *taqiyya* (secrecy or prudence), by which they freely dissimulate their faith and act in every way as do the orthodox when they find themselves in unfriendly surroundings. Incidentally, of all Moslems the Shiites are the most intolerant.

Oddest facet of Shia doctrine is Imanism. Etymologically, *iman* means "leader," but in Shia terminology it means the last legitimate descendant of Ali and Fatima. It is altogether probable that many legitimate descendants are still scattered throughout the Moslem world. However, the great number of those who have claimed this dignity and the insoluble genealogical difficulties have led Shiism to accept the doctrine of *ghaiba* (absence or invisibility) of the Iman. At some time in the past Ali's line is held to have disappeared, but the last scion did not die. Instead, he became invisible, but still directs the Shia community infallibly. In good time, he will reappear as Iman-Mahdi (a Messianic concept), assert his right, and establish his power over Islam. Meantime, the Shiites in their controversy with the orthodox make extensive use of the infallibility which the guidance of the invisible Iman imparts to their own interpretations. As was said, the Shiites are uncertain as to who this Iman was. Hence. various subsects of Shiism exist, as will appear from the following table:

	1 Ali-Fatima	
2 Hasan		3 Hussein
		4. Ali
	5. Zaid (The Iman of the Zaidites)	5. Mohammed
		6. Jafar
	7. Ismail (The Iman of the Ismailites or Seveners)	7. Musa
		8. Ali
		9. Mohammed
		10. Ali
		11. Hasan
		12. Mohammed (The Invisible Iman of the so-called Twelvers)

Iran has always been the stronghold of Shiism. There every Moslem adopts for one of his names "Iman" or a phrase expressing some property of the Iman. There, too, as late as 1906 the National Parliament was convened "in the presence of the hidden Iman." Shiites everywhere make a Holy Week of the second week of Muharram, working themselves up to delirium in commemoration of the "martyrdom of Hussein." Surpassing in holiness even the shrines at Mecca and Medina are the tomb of Ali at Najaf in southern Palestine and that of Hussein at Kerbelah on the right bank of the lower Euphrates.

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Index

Abbasid Caliphs, 333, 334
Abu Bekr, first successor of Mohammed, 296, 297; position in Islamic world, 305, 306
Abu Sofian, father of the sixth caliph, 303; Meccan leader and early opponent of Mohammed, later his diplomatic agent, 289–293
Adams, Wm., British agent at Ieyasu's court, 128
Afghans raid India, 154, 155
Ainus, primitive race of Japan, 75, 76
Al Ghazali, the Moslem Aquinas, 330, 331
Ali, son-in-law of Mohammed, fourth caliph, 296, 303; transmitter of tradition, 328; ancestor of Alids, 333
Allah, Arab ideas of him purified by Jewish and Christian influence, 272; attributes of, 284, 311, 312; daughters of, 269, 271; how known, 310; love for, 331 ff; supreme at Mecca before Mohammed's day, 271, 272
Alvarez, Jorge, describes 16th century Japan, 118 ff
Amaterasu, Japanese sun-goddess, identified with Vairochana, 95
American policy in China, 3, 4
Amida, the Buddha who gives universal salvation, 109 ff
Amitabha replaces Sakyamuni as object of Mahayana devotion, 222
Amru, Moslem general, conqueror of Egypt, 300, 307
Ancestor worship, the Church and, 41–43; explained by J. J. M. De Groot, 41; explained by H. Doré, S.J., 41; explained by H. Spencer, 40; explained by W. Tylor, 40; misuse of term, 37
Ancestral rites, among the Chinese, 38
Animism in Burmese religion, 254
Aquinas, St. Thomas, strictures on Mohammed and Mohammedanism, 279, 280
Arabia, Christianity in, early, 272, 273; geography and physical features of, 266; Herodotus on, 266, 267
Arabs, in ancient chronicles, 267; belief in fate, 270; national characteristics, 267; national characteristics, transformed by Islam, 298; pre-Islamic religion of, 267 ff; religious and superstitious practices of, 273, 274
Architecture, Burmese, 252, 253; in Thailand, 257, 258
Art, Buddhist, 223
Asoka, Hindu monarch, 153, 154; the Buddhist Constantine, 225 ff
Asuras, Dasyus, and Rakshas, demons of Vedic religion, 164
Asvaghosa, author of Buddha's biography, 201
Atman, or the All-Soul, what Indian philosophers mean by it, 171, 172
Automatism, example in Mohammed, 280, 281

Bakufu, military dictatorship, 125 ff
Barlaam and Josaphat, Buddhist legend of, 201, 202
Bhagavadgita (Song of the Lord Krishna), revered Hindu scripture, 184 ff
Bhakti, the religion of personal devotion to Krishna, 184 ff; appraisal of its philosophical and religious value, 188, 189; influenced by Christian doctrine, 189
Brahma-Atman, 172; hymns to, 173, 174
Brahmanas, commentaries on the *Vedas,* 165, 166
Brahmins, judgments of, 191

Buddha, and belief in karma and metempsychosis, 205–207; and belief in reality, 212, 213; on the causes of misery, 213; debt to the *Upanishads,* 203 ff; extravagant encomiums of his philosophy, 212; his Eightfold Path, 215; his "revelation" at Bodh Goya, 210, 211; Japanese legend about, 120; on *mara* or illusion, 211, 212; quest of release from suffering, 204; real founder of Buddhist monasticism, 224; on the remedies for misery, 214; and the social order, 208, 209; summary of his evangel, 211; on unreality of the thinking subject, 204; on world-illusion, 204

Buddhaghosa, Buddhist teacher in Burma, 251

Buddha's Tooth, 249

Buddhism, adaptation and renascence, 109; in China, 71–73; causes of decline in India, 244, 245; declines under Gupta rule, 234, 235; early councils and schools of interpretation, 178; facets of its history, 178; goes to Burma, 250 ff; its decline in India, 179; its legacy to Hinduism, 178, 179; monastery life of, 248, 249; reasons for wide diffusion, 246; spread to Ceylon, 247, 248; struggle with Shinto, 100

Buddhism (Mahayanist) adopts bhakti, 222

Buddhist, art, beginnings of, 223; military establishments, 106; monasticism in Thailand, 258; monks and nuns, 224; moral code, 221, 223; "Ordination," 249; "plenary" council in Kashmir, 232; profession of faith, 226

Buddhists, accommodate creed to government policy, 96

Burma, character of Buddhist monks in, 252; custom of murder for magical purposes, 254, 255; organization of Buddhist church in, 251, 252; vitality of Buddhist faith in, 253, 254

Burmese architecture, 252, 253

Caliph, meaning of term, 297; election of Abu Bekr as first caliph, 297; his position in the Islamic world, 305, 306

Canonists, schools of, in Islam, 329

Canonists (*Ulema*), their universal consent (*Ijma*) accepted in interpretation of Mohammed's "revelation," 329

Capitals, Japanese, at Nara, Nagaoka, Kyoto, 104

Carlyle, on awakening of Arabia, 264

Caste in India, 147, 148

Ceylon, ethnology of, 246, 247; legend on coming of Buddhism, 247, 248; literary activity of Buddhist monks, 248; present religious situation, 250

Chaitanya, Hindu philosopher, 190

Chiang Kai-shek, 2–4

Chi-i, Buddhist teacher in China, 71

China, American policy in, 3, 4; ancestor worship in, 37 ff; Boxer Uprising, 26; Church in, 18, 22, 23; Communists in, 2–4; first European War, 24; funeral rites in, 37; the pedagogue of early Japan, 86, 87; polydemonism in, 35; polytheism in, 34, 35; Portuguese in, 18 ff; second European War, 25

Chinese, Buddhism, its beliefs and practices, 71–73; Communists, 2–4; literature, beginning of, 7, 8

Chinese dynasties, origin of, 5; character of, 6; Chang, 6; Chow, 6–8; Han, 9, 10; Hia, 6; Kitan and Sung, 12–15; Manchu, 21–26; Ming, 16–21; Mongol, 14–16; Tang, 10, 11

Chinese Republic, 1–4

Chinese Rites Decrees, 22, 42–43

Ching Wang, Emperor of China, 8

Christianity, in the Arabia of Mohammed's day, 272, 273; compared to Islam, 308, 309

Christians, first persecution in Japan, 127, 128; Mohammed and, 331

Chu Hsi, founder of Neo-Confucianism, 57, 58

Chuang Chou, important interpreter of Taoism, 63

Church, Islam and, 307; persecution in Japan, 127, 128

Church in China, advent, 18; decline, 22, 23; success, 22

Church and state in the Japan of the 19th and 20th centuries, 137 ff
Clive, Robert, 145, 155
Communists in China, 2–4
Companions of the Prophet, accepted as authentic vehicles of tradition, 328
Confucian ethics, modified in Japan, 87, 88
Confucianism, as a religion of the people, 58, 59; development of, 53 ff; struggles with rival Taoism and Buddhism, 57, 62, 64, 65
Confucius, ancient books revised and interpreted by, 46; on authority and right of revolution, 51; books about him and his teaching, 47; on Canons of politeness, 49; his ethical ideal, 44, 45; his life, 44 ff; his pedagogical method, 47; his success in public office, 45; his teaching career, 45, 46; on human nature and self-discipline, 47, 48; on the ideal or superior man, 48, 49; on religious belief and practice, 52–54; on right government, 51, 52; vignette of him in the *Analects,* 49; on the virtues, 50
Constitution, Japanese of 1889, 135, 136; Japanese of 1946, 142
Conversion to Islam, historical causes of, 307, 309
Creel, H. G., on origin of Tien, 31

Daughters of Allah, 269, 271
De Groot, J. J. M., on ancestor worship, 41; on origin of Tien, 30
Demetrius, Hellenic King of Bactria, 229, 230
Dengyo Daishi, Japanese Buddhist teacher, 93
Dervishes, 332
Dharmakara (Amida), the vows of, 111, 112
Diamond Cycle, in Shingon Buddhism, 94, 95
Divinity of emperor, origin of idea in Japan, 88, 89
Doré, Henri, S.J., on ancestor worship, 41
Dubois, Abbé, on India, 148, 155, 193, 195
Dupleix in India, 155

Emperor, rehabilitation in Japan, 133 ff
Emperors and feudalism, 99
Ethics, Confucian, modified in Japan, 87, 88
Euhemerism, examples in China, 34

Fa-hsien, Chinese pilgrim, on Buddhism in India at start of fifth century A.D., 237 ff
Faith, Buddhist profession of, 226; of Mohammedans, 260
Feudalism, abolished in Japan, 134; controlled by shoguns, 126
Filial piety, a Chinese virtue, 38, 39
Five Pillars of Islam, cardinal observances of Moslems, 317 ff
Foreign rulers of India, 144–146
Four Schools of Canonists in Islam, 329
Fujiwara, family holding the shogunate, 103 ff; policy of, 105, 106
Funeral rites in China, 37
Future life in the *Vedas,* 165

Genku, Ryonin, Shinran, Japanese Jodists, 112
Genshin, Japanese bonze, 110
Gibbon, on Mohammed and Mohammedanism, 262, 263
Giles, H. A., on Tien and Shang Ti, 28
Gods of home and hearth, in China, 33, 34
Gospels and the Buddha story, 202
Grace, Koran on, 313
Graeco-Bactrian kingdom in India, 154
Greeks in India, 228 ff
Gupta Empire in India marks Periclean Age, 235

Hanifs, monotheists of Arabia, 273
Han-Siro, Japanese convert and helper of St. Francis Xavier, describes 16th century Japan, 119 ff
Harris, Townsend, first American consul general in Japan, 133
Hassan and Hussein, sons of Ali and Fatima, ancestors of Sherifs and Seyyids, 333, 334

Haydon, A. E., on origin of Tien, 31, 32
Heaven, Koran on, 314 ff
Heian period of Japanese culture, 104 ff
Hejirah, or flight from Mecca, 287, 288
Hell, Koran on, 314
Heresy in Islam, 329 ff
Herodotus, on Arabia, 266, 267; on India, 151; on religion of Arabs, 269
Hideyoshi, warrior and shogun, 125–128
Hinayana Buddhism, of Burma, 251; of Ceylon, 248; introduced in China, 70, 71; its rise and tenets, 221, 222
Hindu, festivals, 194, 195; idolatry, 193; literature, 156, 157; spiritual resistance, 146; temples, 192, 193
Hindus, origin of, 144
Hitetada, persecutor of Japanese Christians, 128
Hiuen-Tsang, Chinese pilgrim to India, 240, 241
Holy War, motivation and psychology of, 298, 299; "revelation" to Mohammed, 288
Hongwou, founder of Ming dynasty, 17–18
Hsuncius, founder of atheistic Confucianism, 56
Huns in India, 239, 240
Hussein, object of Shiite devotion, "martyr," 333–335
Hwangti, Chinese emperor, persecutes the literati, 56, 57

Idolatry, Hindu, 193; in pre-Islamic religion, 269, 270
Iemitsu, persecutor of Japanese Christians, 128
Ieyasu, shogun and persecutor of Christians, 125, 128
Imanism, a facet of Shiite doctrine, 334, 335
Immortals, the fairy-folk of the Chinese, 34
India, Afghans in, 154, 155; caste in, 147, 148; foreign rulers in, 144–146; Graeco-Bactrians in, 154; Greeks in, 228 ff; Huns in, 239, 240; Indo-Scythians in, 154; Mogul rule in, 155; population statistics, 148
India and Pakistan, augury on, 196
Indian philosophy, characteristics of, 197; understanding of Western World's philosophy, 191
Indo-Scythians in India, 154
Ise, chief Shinto temple at, 98
Islam, appraised by its own, 262; Christian appraisal of, 262–265; claims for universality, 261, 262; compared to Christianity, 308, 309; conversion to, 307, 309; critical age of, 265; epic age of, 303; evolution of its civil polity, 304 ff; first converts to, 282; first threefold wave of conquest, 300 ff; heresy in, 329 ff; its historical attitude toward the Church, 307; meaning of term, 261; principle of religious authority in, 306
Ito, Prince, Japanese statesman, 135

Japan, early cultural debt to China, 86, 87; in China, 273; church and state in, 137 ff; ethnic elements from Korea, 78, 79; geography of, 74; mythical history, 75, 77, 79, 80
Japanese, economic life, 75; literature of, 104, 105, 106; origin of, 75 ff; physical characteristics of, 80
Japanese emperor, rehabilitation of his prestige, 133 ff
Jen, or "human-heartedness," characteristic virtue of Confucianism, 50
Jews, in Arabia of Mohammed's day, 272; Mohammed and, 288, 292, 293
Jimmu Tenno, unifier of Japan, 77
Jinghis Khan, 13–14
Jinn (demons), in early Arabia and in the Koran, 270, 271
Jodo, or Pure Land Buddhism, 109, 110

Kaaba stone, associated with Abraham and Ishmael, 322, 323; associated with Adam and Eve, 323, 324; description of, 325; pagan origin of, 322; "revelation" anent, 322
Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, a history of Kashmir, 242 ff
Kamatari, seizes power in Japan, 101–103

Kami, etymology of, 81, 82; origin of, 84, 85
Kanghi, emperor of China, 21–23; foreign policy, 21, 22; religious policy, 22
Kanishka, founder of Kushana dynasty in India, patron of Buddhism (?), 231, 232
Kapilavastu, Buddha's birthplace, found desolate by Fa-hsien, 238
Karma, what it means, 169
Kashmir, curious religious history, 242 ff
Keane, A. H., on Japanese type, 80
Keen Lung, emperor of China, 23
Khaled, "Sword of Allah," Moslem general, 293, 300
Kojiki, Kujiki, and *Nihongi,* documents of early Japan, 77, 78
Komei, Japanese emperor, and the foreign crisis of 1853–1867, 133
Koran, claimed to be final and crowning revelation, 283; doctrine on "martyrdom," 290; earlier parts, 283; on grace and prayer, 313; on Heaven, 314 ff; on Hell, 314; its moral code, 316, 317; on Last Judgment, 313, 314; original form and recension, 281; on original sin and redemption, 313; reverence shown to, 327; text of, 328
Krishna, on *avatar* of Vishnu, 183 ff
Kubilai Khan, 14, 15
Kukai, Japanese Buddhist teacher, 93

Lammens, H., S.J., on modern crisis in Islam, 265
Lao-tze, his life, 60
Last judgment, Koran on, 313, 314
"Lent," Moslem, month of Ramadan, 319, 320
Literature, Chinese, 7, 8; Hindu, 156, 157; Japanese, 104, 105, 116
Liturgy of Moslems, 317–319

Magic, among the Burmese, 254, 255; in Shinto, 84; in Thailand, 259
Mahabharata, Hindu epic, 150
Mahabharata and *Ramayana,* the basis of Hindu religion, 181 ff; composite works and gradual growths, 180, 181
Mahayana Buddhism, adopts bhahti, 222; brought to Japan, 89, 90; introduced in China, 68–70; its rise and tenets, 220 ff
Mahmud of Ghazni, 154
"Martyrdom," Koran on, 290
"Masses for the dead," Buddhist rite, 69, 72
Maurya Empire, 225
Mecca, capture of, 293; duty of pilgrimage to, 321–326; flight from (Hejira), 287, 288; Mohammed's pilgrimage to (632), 295
Megasthenes' account of India, 152, 153
Meiji (Mutsuhito), Japanese emperor, 133 ff; reforms of, 133 ff
Menander, Greek founder of a Graeco-Indian kingdom, patron of Buddhism, 228 ff
Mencius (Mang-tze), his teaching on religion, conduct, and politics, 54–56
Metempsychosis in Indian thought, 170–172
Mihirakula, Hun chieftain, anathema to Buddhists, 240
Minamoto clan, conquers the Taira, 106, 107
Mogul rule in India, 155
Mohammed, biographical data, 275 ff, 282 ff; capture of Mecca, 293; claims to a "revelation," 277–279; consolidates his power at Mecca, 293; content of first preaching, 282–285; designation of his successor, 294; deterioration of his character, 293, 294; example of psychological automatism, 280, 281; fact and extent of his chicanery, 280, 281; the "Harem Revelations," 294, 295; his astuteness at Medina, 288–294; his attitude toward Christians, 331; his garbled knowledge of Christian doctrine, 312, 313; his plans for the future, 327, 328; and the Jews, 288, 292, 293; last illness and death, 295, 296; mental gifts and education, 276; opposition at Mecca, 285; pilgrimage to Mecca in 632, 295; transfigured by legend, 329
Mohammedans, faith of, 260
Monasticism, Buddhist, 248, 249; in Thailand, 258

Monism, on higher and lower levels in Islam, 332, 333
Monks, Buddhist, 224
Moral code, Buddhist, 221, 223; of the Koran, 316, 317
Moslem, meaning of term, 261; mysticism, 331–333
Moslems from Mecca to Medina and to Abyssinia, 286
Mosque, typical form of, 318, 319
Muawiyah, son of Abu Sofian and sixth caliph, organizer of Islam's political government, 303, 304
Mutazilites (Separatists), heretics of Islam, 330
Mysticism, Moslem, 331–333

Nalanda and Vallabhi, Buddhist "universities," 241
Nara, Buddhist temple at, 103
Nasik, caves at, 233 ff
Nature-gods, in China, 33
Nembutsu, the prayer of Jodo Buddhists, 110
Neo-Confucianism, its alliance with the state, 58; its philosophy, ethics, and views on religion, 57, 58
Nichiren, famous bonze and patriot, 112–114
Nirvana, what it is, 216, 217
Nobunaga, unifier of Japan, 125, 127
Nuns, Buddhist, 224

Omar, Moslem general, later caliph, 293, 297, 300, 303
Omito Fo (Amitabha), supernatural being venerated by Chinese Buddhists, 68, 70, 71
Oral tradition, first vehicle of Buddha's teaching, 218, 219
"Ordination," Buddhist, 249
Original sin, Koran on, 313

Pantheism becomes a basic tenet of Japanese thinking, 96, 97
Pataliputra (modern Patna), 152, 226, 239
Pearly Emperor, a Taoist divinity, 66
Perry, Commodore, negotiates treaty with Japan, 132, 133
Philosophy, Hindu, 197
Pilgrimage to Mecca, 321–326
Polydemonism in China, 35
Polynesians, ethnic element in Japan, 76, 77
Polytheism in China, its causes, 34, 35
Portuguese in China, 18 ff
Power, E., S.J., on Islam, 264
Prayer, Koran on, 313; of Moslems, 317–319
Predestination in Koranic teaching, 311, 312
Priesthood in the merged cults of Shinto and Buddhism, 97
Proto-Malays, ethnic element in Japan, 76
Pushyamitra, Indian ruler anathematized by Buddhists, 228 ff

Rama, an *avatar* of Vishnu, 183
Ramadan, month of, the Moslem Lent, 319, 320
Ramanuja, Hindu philosopher, 190
Ramayana, Hindu epic, 150, 151
Reason in interpreting Mohammed's "revelation," 329
Religious charlatans, Hindu, 193
"Revelations" of Mohammed, 277–279; interpretation of, 329
Routes of Buddhist missionaries from India, 242
Ryobu, or Double Aspect Shinto, 95 ff

Sabeans, monotheists of Arabia, 273
St. Augustine, on evil spirits as agents of false religion, 36
Sakyamuni (Buddha), 176; attitude toward polytheism, 177; his biography, 197 ff; compared with Upanishad thinkers, 177
Sale, on Mohammed and Mohammedanism, 263; his apology for Mohammed criticized, 308
Samgha or Brotherhood, Buddhist monastic organization, as vehicle of Buddhist culture, 90, 91
Samurai caste, rise and progress of, 107, 108; decline of, 130, 131
Sankara, Hindu philosopher, 190
Shang-Ti, Chinese word for God, 27, 28
Shang Ti and Tien, relation between, 28
Shiites (Partisans) in Islam, 333–335

Shimabara uprising, 129
Shingon, a sect of Buddhism, 93 ff
Shintai, objects inhabited by *kami,* 82, 83
Shinto, beliefs and practices, 81 ff; defended by hereditary priestly families, 97; the ethos of Japanese culture, 81; reinterpretation of, 97, 98; renaissance under the Tokugawas, 129, 130; resistance to foreign ideas, 92; sacrifices and purificatory rites, 83; survival during feudal age, 116
Shinto priests, their functions, 83
Shogunate, fall of, 133
Shokotu Taishi, Japanese emperor and patron of Buddhism, 91; patron of Chinese culture in Japan, 100, 101
Shrine observances in Japan and the Christian conscience, 139 ff
Shwedagon pagoda at Rangoon, 253
Siam, *see* Thailand
Sin, notion of, in Shinto, 84
Soma-drink, 162, 163
Soul, its future state according to the Chinese, 40; its nature according to the Chinese, 39
Spencer, Herbert, on ancestor worship, 40
State Shinto and Sect Shinto, 138, 139
Sufism, name for Moslem mysticism, 331
Summa contra Gentiles, 262
Sun Yat Sen, 1, 2
Sunna (tradition), together with Koran a rule of Moslem faith, 328 ff
Sunnites (Traditionalists) in Islam, 333
Superstition, in Thailand, 259
Superstition run riot, Hindu, 194
Sutras, Brahminic works in support of Vedic orthodoxy, 175
Sword Hunt of 1587, 126

Taeping Movement, 25
Taira clan, war with the Minamoto, 106, 107
Tamo (Bodhidharma), early Buddhist missionary in China, 70, 71
Tao Te Ching, the Scripture of Taoists, 60; teaching of, 60, 63
Tao (the Way), connection with India's philosophy, 61–63; meaning of, 60 ff
Taoism, final form, 65, 66; its black magic, 63, 64; its historical evolution, 63 ff
Taoist "Pope," 64, 67
Tat vam asi ("Thou, too, art That"), famous expression of Hindu Monism, 174
Tendai, a sect of Buddhism, 93, 94
Thailand (Siam), brief history, 256; magic and superstition in, 259; origin and character of Buddhism in, 256, 257; religious architecture in, 257, 258
Thebaid of Buddhist ascetics in western India, 232 ff
Thomas, St., *see* Aquinas
Three Ages, prophecy of, 111
The Three Ways, in Japan's cultural growth, 91
Tien, attributes of, 28, 29; ideogram of, 27; meaning of, 27; origin of belief in, according to Catholic scholars, 32; origin of belief in, according to Creel, De Groot, and Haydon, 30–32
Tokugawa, policy of isolationism, 129; religious policy of, 127 ff; shoguns from 1600 to 1870, 125 ff
Tokyo, transfer of Japanese Capital to, 126
Tradition and rule of Moslem faith, 328 ff
Trimurti, the Hindu "Trinity," 181, 182
Tuti-laoyeh, the place-gods of the Chinese, 33
Tylor, W., on ancestor worship, 40
Tzu Ssu, Confucius' grandson and author of *The Mean in Action,* 54

Ulema (Canonists) and their interpretation, 329
Umako, founder of the shogunate, 100, 101
Upanishads, meaning of word, 167; attitude toward *Vedas,* 167, 168; content, 167; problems they attempt to solve, 168, progress of their reasoning, 168–169

Vairochana and the Diamond Cycle,

speculation of Shingon Buddhism, 94, 95
Vallabha, Hindu philosopher, 190
Vardhamana and Jainism, 175, 176
Varuna, the Indian Zeus, 159, 160
Veda-anta, meaning of, 167, 168
Vedas, content of, 158, 159; cosmogony in, 164; future life in, 165; origin, date, authorship of, 158
Vedic gods, 160 ff
Vedic prayer and sacrifice, 161 ff

Wat Pho (monastery), in Bangkok, 257
White Horse Monastery, center of early Chinese Buddhism, 68, 69
Wieger, L., S.J., characterization of early Confucianism, 54, 55
Womb-store Cycle, speculation of Shingon Buddhism, 95
Wou Sankwei, Chinese patriot, 20, 21

Xavier, St. Francis, appraisal of his place in Japanese history, 124; his account of Portuguese India, 155; his apostolate in Japan, 121–124; his judgment on Japanese character and on the Buddhist bonzes, 122, 123

Yama, the first man, 164, 165
Yellow Hats, Taoist secret society, 64
Yorimoto, general of Minamoto clan, 107
Yui-itsu, a form of Shinto, 97, 98

Zen Buddhism, 114, 115

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